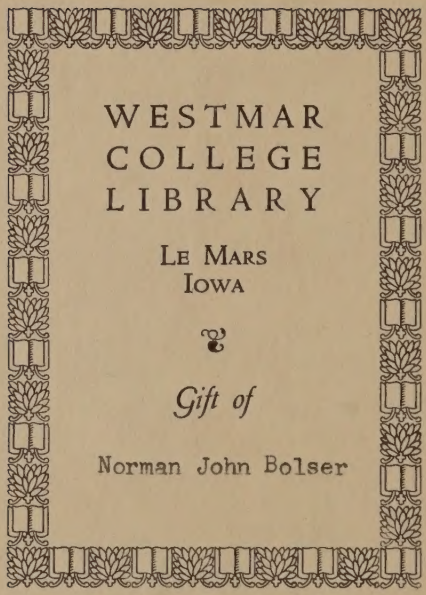
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SECRET MEMOIRS

OF THE

COURT OF BERLIN

UNDER WILLIAM II

VOLUME I

Secret Memoirs

THE KAISER AND KAISERIN OF GERMANY

VOLUME I

The Kaiser

PRIVATE LIVES

OF

Kaiser William II. and His Consort

Secret History of the Court of Berlin

FROM THE PAPERS AND DIARIES OF
URSULA COUNTESS VON EPPINGHOVEN
DAME DU PALAIS TO HER MAJESTY THE EMPRESS-QUEEN

By HENRY W. FISCHER

VOLUME I

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INTRODUCTION BY URSULA, COUNTESS VON EPPINGHOVEN

"*Vive le roi!*" croaked the imperial standard floating over the gray old Berlin Schloss when I alighted from my carriage at the Court-marshal's gate to report for duty on June 25, 1888, and "Long live the King!" breathed and echoed all the new brooms and old around me in the antechambers, in the state and in the living and servants' apartments of that immense pile. Yonder, just across the *Puppenbrücke*, at half-mast and draped in black, were seen the flags of two Queens, a widow of three and a half months the one, the other had buried the noblest of husbands but ten days before. Their palaces, which scarcely ever possessed the brazen front of right royal splendor, appeared deserted, gloomy, and melancholy beyond hope as the emblem of death wafted above them; but with us—the new masters—all was life and excitement (being now a salaried body-attendant of the reigning Empress, I must needs adopt the servant-hall jargon to make myself popular with the rest)—we kept house on a small scale and on scanty rations in the little Potsdam Marble Palace[1] long enough; one Court-marshal (Major von Liebenau), one *Grande Maitresse* (Countess Brockdorff), was all we could afford; but, *presto!* there will be First Grand Charges, Grand Charges,

[1] The Marble Palace was the official residence of Prince and Princess William up to the death of Emperor Frederick.

and Charges of our Court presently, Equerries by the dozen, and Chamberlains galore! And Her Imperial and Royal Majesty, the Princess William that was, to whom *Herr* von Liebenau only three months ago refused a glass of Madeira for second breakfast on the plea that his exchequer could not afford luxuries of that sort, the Kaiser's *Frau* shall have as many women adjutants as the Emperor has males. And we will tear down this very Schloss, build cathedrals and play-houses and yachts, and be done with the whole small-beer business of yielding to a budget; we will, in fine, spend the forty millions of our royal inheritance!

Such were the prevailing sentiments in the sphere I had entered; not unfamiliar ones, by any means, for the events just concluded had been under discussion in the Marble Palace for years, and so frequently and openly had they passed in review that even to see them in print would not have surprised me. Yet the bartering and marketing of dead men's shoes carried on within ear-shot of the royal widows by my new colleagues and everybody else in the palace, from Court-marshal to scullion,—this haggling and huckstering outraged all my finer sensibilities. I had seen royalty born, and had helped to distribute its garter on the wedding-eve; I had stood at its death-bed, and in royal company had enjoyed the good things of this world,—in fact, the greater part of my life had been spent at Court; but where formerly I was welcomed as a friend and companion, I was now—such are the vicissitudes of life—merely one of a few hundred attendants. Was, then, Madame de Cornuel's adage, that no great man is perfect in his valet's eyes, to be brought home to me with terrible force right at the beginning?

"These people," I argued to myself, "are like sponges, absorbing the atmosphere of their environment, being at

the same time too careful of their own interests to assume an attitude out of countenance with that of their betters. Can it be that I have mistaken the character of the august personages upon whom the eyes of the whole world are now riveted, and who are likely to engage the most lively attention hereafter?"

A lady of title and position, I had, after losing my fortune, accepted their Majesties' command to join the ranks of a retinue already noted for high-sounding names, and by royal warrant was appointed *Hofdame* to the Empress; that is, a functionary whom "the first gentleman of Europe" cleverly characterized as "making an occasional one of four large hoops in a gilded coach; a maid aiding the languor of an easy party in a royal box at the play; one that goes to the theatre, to concerts, and oratorios gratis, and has physicians without fees and medicine without druggists' bills." Was I to be that, and nothing more? The voice of Court-marshal von Liebenau, now my superior, woke me from the reverie into which I had fallen. The lord steward, at that time omnipotent, had settled upon my immediate employment. "You will for the present assume the functions of both *Maîtresse de Maison* and maid of honor," he said. "It is a ticklish post, that binds one closely to their Majesties' heels, inasmuch as the care of the all-highest persons is given into your hands, for it has already been announced that there will be no change in the intimate domestic arrangements. Kaiser and Kaiserin will continue to occupy one bed-chamber as formerly and you must superintend the body-service of both the all-highest master and mistress: but as Your Ladyship has lived in the great world, and knows more about polite requirements than many a Princess, the aspect will not frighten you; for my part, I place implicit trust in your acumen and judgment. Later in the day, a list of special

instructions will be sent to you. And now, my dear Countess," concluded the courtier, rising from his arm-chair, "take a bit of friendly advice before you select your suite of rooms among the apartments set aside for Her Majesty's ladies. If you want to succeed at our Court, leave all thoughts of independence, all inborn notions of truthfulness and common, every-day honesty, outside the palace gate; divest yourself of personality—all individualism save that of our masters' is odious—be an automaton pure and simple, smile upon Her Majesty's whims, do not be ruffled by a superior's insults, and if at any time you must fly into a rage, retaliate upon those under you."

I was about to speak, to protest, but the Court-marshal anticipated me.

"I know what you want to say," he cried; "you think it mean and contemptible to let the innocent suffer for their betters' wrongs, and I agree with you. But we all do it, must do it; it is a sort of lightning-rod for one's ill-temper. And now, *au revoir*, Madame *la Comtesse*. Once more—be an automaton." With that *Herr* von Liebenau kissed my hand, and a minute later I stood in the court-yard quite beside myself with wrathful indignation.

True enough, I was to become "one of so many hoops," and might consider myself lucky if not forced to degenerate into something worse!

The principal square within the palace, which is adorned by Kiss's noble bronze group of St. George and the Dragon, was gay with carriages and soldiery in parade-dress, and as I crossed it on my way to another wing of the castle I came within range of a large volume of voices shouting "*Hoch!*" and "Hurrah!" in enthusiastic chorus; they belonged to members of the Reichstag assembled in the White Hall to pay homage to the new lord, as one of the officers on guard informed me.

"His Majesty's most loyal opposition appears to enjoy the situation," I remarked.

"Pshaw!" retorted the aristocratic warrior, with a disdainful curl of his lip, "*Gnädige Frau* would not be surprised at that if, like myself, you had been privileged to hear His Majesty rehearse the speech he seems to have just now delivered. It came late last night, still warm, if I may so express myself, from the Chancellor's palace. The Prince" (meaning Bismarck)—"that was the consensus of opinion—surpassed all his previous efforts in the wheedling line by this diplomatic document, which fairly blazes with assurances of constitutional government and the importance of peaceful legislation. The Kaiser read it aloud to his adjutants, and all were greatly edified, I assure you."

Another volley of popular applause burst at this moment overhead, and soon afterward the deputies began to descend from the state apartments in their funny old-fashioned swallow-tail coats, dickies, paper collars, and brilliant decorations. Among those who recognized and came up to greet me was the spokesman of one of the liberal parties, or fractions of parties, that heretofore had been among the ardent and loud-voiced admirers of Emperor Frederick. Indeed, it was not quite a month since I had heard him say to a conservative colleague: "Your Prince William is nothing but a tool of '*Hoffpfaffen*' and Anti-Semites. No honest man can have confidence in him." To-day this worthy politician appeared stocked to overflowing with cheap sentimentality about the very royal person he had essayed to abhor. I turned from him and other noisy weather-cocks "that rattled and sang of mutation" and fled to my rooms, taking the first of the row of apartments the lackey opened for my inspection. I had not the heart to go farther. A good cry, I felt, would benefit me more than the advantages that some of the other suites might possess.

How this one hour's experience at Court, in my new capacity, had unnerved me! If it had not been for the promises made to their Majesties, I should have flown from the gilded cage that very instant; but what was to be gained by offering an affront to my august master and mistress? I had to live, Talleyrand notwithstanding, and if servitude in a palace was fraught with such setbacks, what would it be in private life? After all, "society is divided into two classes,—the fleecers and the fleeced," and, assuredly, it is better to belong to the fleecers or, in this case, to the fleecers' Court.

The argument was abominable, I grant (*Herr* von Liebenau himself, whom I soon learned to regard as the most selfish servant of the most selfish master, could not have advanced anything less dignified and more venal), but it was the sort of reasoning needed to back up my waning courage. Once conceived, I clung to it, I pampered it and enlarged on it, and gradually my nerves quieted down. Throwing myself on a lounge, I let refreshing slumber steal upon me, and did not awake for several hours and when the bell of my apartment had rung half a dozen times.

"Your Ladyship seems to feel quite at home already," said *Herr* von Liebenau's secretary, who brought the promised instructions, for it was he who demanded admission; "I thought I should never succeed in awakening you. We are all good sleepers in the palace, though, if we get the chance."

* * *

Nearly nine years have passed since I first cried myself to sleep in the big gray Schloss by the Spree while the hot June sun was pouring into my room and all Berlin discussed the Kaiser's first meeting with the *Reichstag;* and

now that I commit to paper these memoirs of the Second William's Court, let me say that in all that period I was but used as a beast of burden by the great personages, my masters, whom Providence sent into the world "ready booted and spurred to ride,"—no better, no worse.

Special reasons for complaint I have none; neither will these pages wantonly afford umbrage to the exalted ones of whom I write, unless, indeed, they object to truth, that sentiment concerning which Dr. Johnson wrote some one hundred and fifty years ago: "There is something noble in publishing it, though it may condemn one's self."

I have no personal end in view with these papers; no excuses are offered for this narrative of Court life as I have seen it. If in part it borders on the unexpected, by upsetting established notions, and again explains certain things which have become history from a standpoint totally different from the one popularly accepted and believed, let the reader remember that truth is stranger than fiction, and that history is but a lie, to borrow a phrase from the Duchess of Orleans, the sister-in-law of Louis XV, "a smart woman, an audacious woman," the same who exclaimed, on hearing the false report that Frederick the Great was marching upon Versailles after Rossbach: "So much the better, I shall at last see a *King* then."

Surely, no one will deny that the lives of the great "lay accurately mirrored" in the head of that gifted Princess; if she quarrelled with their habitual reflectors, royalty's *cavalieres serventes* or romancers pure and simple, it was on account of their general untrustworthiness. If they are historiographers, like Mr. Poultney Bigelow, designated—that is a less harsh word than the official "commanded"—to write the life of an august personage like Kaiser William, the insight into affairs permitted such authors is so limited as to make it almost valueless compared

with matters of which they are kept in ignorance. Writers standing altogether outside the pale of the Court are even worse off for facts, save such as may crystallize in a fertile brain nourished by book-wisdom and weaned from truth, or what is worse, from decency.

For my part, I shall give only such incidents of the lives of William II and his consort as have come under my personal observation, or that I know of by reliable witnesses. The story of a very few incidents that occurred before the present Emperor's enthronization I shall be obliged to credit to the general gossip of the palace.

THE ROYAL HOHENZOLLERNS AND THEIR KINDRED MENTIONED IN THESE VOLUMES

FREDERICK I, first King of Prussia, 1701–1713. Before 1701 the Hohenzollerns were known as Prince-Electors of Brandenburg.

FREDERICK WILLIAM I, 1713–1740. Father of Frederick the Great.

FREDERICK II, the Great, 1740–1786. His best-known sister was the Margravine of Baireuth (died in 1757), authoress of the celebrated Memoirs. Frederick the Great was succeeded by his nephew:

FREDERICK WILLIAM II, 1786–1797. He was the notorious bigamist and debt-contractor. He was succeeded by his son:

FREDERICK WILLIAM III, 1797–1840. He was the husband of Queen Louise, a Princess of Strelitz (died in 1810), and the father of his successors:

FREDERICK WILLIAM IV, 1840–1861. This King became mad and died childless. A daughter of his brother William (died 1846), Princess Marie, married Maximilian II, King of Bavaria. Queen Marie (died 1889) had two sons,—Ludwig II, King of Bavaria, who died insane in 1886, and the present King Otto of Bavaria, who is also insane. Frederick William IV was succeeded by his brother:

WILLIAM I, King, 1861–1888. Became German Emperor in 1871. The Queen and Empress of William I was Augusta, Princess of Sachsen-Weimar, and a granddaughter (on her mother's side) of Czar Paul I, who died insane. William I had a daughter, Louise, now Grand Duchess of Baden, and was succeeded by his son:

FREDERICK III, March–June, 1888. His widowed Empress and Queen, styled Empress Frederick, is the oldest daughter of Queen Victoria of England, and was born in 1840. Her children are:

William II, Emperor and King since June, 1888; Charlotte, born 1860, Hereditary Princess of Sachsen-Meiningen; Prince Henry of Prussia, born 1862, married to Irene of Hesse, sister of the Czarina; Victoria, born 1866, Princess of Lippe; Sophie, born 1870, Crown Princess of Greece; Marguerite, born 1872, Princess Frederick Charles of Hesse-Cassel. William II is married to Auguste Victoria, born 1858, eldest daughter of Frederick, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg. The couple has seven children, six boys and one girl.

William, Crown Prince, born May, 1882, married to Cecilia, daughter of Grand Duchess Anastasia of Russia and the late Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who died by his own hand. Cecilia is the sister of the Crown Princess of Denmark, who is afflicted with consumption, it is feared.

Issue: Prince Wilhelm, born 1906.

Prince Louis Ferdinand, born 1907.

Prince Eitel Frederick, born 1883, married to Sophie Charlotte, daughter of Grand Duke of Oldenburg.

Prince Adelbert, born 1884, unmarried in 1909.

Prince August, born 1887, married to Princess Alexandra of Schleswig, his cousin.

Prince Oscar, born 1888, and Prince Joachim, born in 1890, were unmarried in 1909.

Princess Victoria Louise, born 1892, as above.

Prince Frederick Leopold of Prussia is the Kaiser's cousin and brother-in-law, this Prince being married to Louise Sophie, Princess of Schleswig-Holstein, sister of Empress Auguste Victoria.

The Princely Houses of Hohenzollern (Hohenzollern-Hechingen and Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen), whose possessions were ceded to Prussia in 1849, are, like the royal line, descended from Rudolph, *Graf* von Zollern, but, professing the Catholic faith, have not intermarried with the royal line for several centuries. Members of the

royal and princely lines call each other "cousins" by courtesy.

CHARLES ANTON, Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, is married to Antonie, Royal Princess of Portugal. His eldest son:

THE HEREDITARY PRINCE WILLIAM, born 1864, is married to Therese, Princess of the Deux-Siciles. Prince Charles Anton's second son:

FERDINAND, Crown Prince of Roumania, married Princess Marie of Edinburgh. The Duke, her father, is now Duke of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha. A third son:

CARL ANTON, is married to Josephine, daughter of the *Comte* de Flanders.

DUKE GÜNTHER of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, brother of Empress Auguste Victoria. Born 1863. He is the husband of Princess Dorothy of Sachsen-Coburg-Kohary, daughter of Prince Philip, Austrian Field-Marshal, and Princess Louise, a daughter of King Leopold of Belgium; Princess Louise has of late been declared sane. The mother of Prince Philip is Princess Clémentine, daughter of the late Louis-Philippe of France. The Czar of Bulgaria is a younger brother of Prince Philip.

PRINCE CHRISTIAN, the husband of Princess Helene of Great Britain, is an uncle of the Duke of Schleswig and of Empress Auguste Victoria.

PRINCE CHRISTIAN'S BROTHER, FREDERICK (died July 2, 1865), married Mary Lee, daughter of David Lee, of New York, November 30, 1864, after assuming the Austrian title of *Prinz* von Noer.

PRINCESS VON NOER, his widow, who, by this marriage, became the aunt of the German Empress, married, on April 14, 1874, General — later Field-Marshal — *Graf* von Waldersee, who died in 1904.

DUCHESS ADÉLAIDE of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, mother of the German Empress, was a Princess of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, and a cousin of Prince Hohenlohe, the Chancellor of the German Empire. The Duchess died in 1900. Prince Hohenlohe died a year later.

THE KAISER

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CHAPTER I

"Is it a fine boy?
"VICTORIA."

But one person, Major von Normann, of the First Guards, was present, when, on June 15, 1888, at noon, scarcely an hour after the gallant Frederick had breathed his last, the new lord drew the above despatch from his father's papers.

"What did His Majesty say on discovering the Queen's telegram?" I asked Normann at the Emperor's funeral.

"Not a word; yet, if possible, he turned a shade paler, while his left hand convulsively closed around the hilt of his sabre."

Every time a Prussian king dies, a spirit of unspeakable savagery seems to take hold of his lawful successor.

"In Berlin, from Tuesday, May 31, 1740, the day of the late Majesty's death, till the Thursday following, the post was stopped and the gates closed; no *estafette* could be despatched, though all the ambassadors were busy writing," says Carlyle in his "Frederick the Great." The present Kaiser's great-grandfather placed his sire's mistress and all her friends and relatives under arrest the moment Frederick William II died; and the Empress Frederick, her daughters, the members of her Court, her physicians, friends, and servants, were prisoners for many hours, beginning at five minutes past eleven o'clock, on June 15, 1888. Until her son and heir had concluded his investigations

and made all arrangements he intended to effect, no living soul was allowed to leave Castle Friedrichskron; sentinels with guns loaded stood over the telegraph operators to prevent communication with the outer world, and the telephone was similarly guarded.

That upon the heel of these precautionary measures the newly-made Kaiser invited Normann to attend him in his search for state papers and other documents, of which the one mentioned, while not the most valuable, was certainly not the least interesting, shows the extent of his confidence in this man, then esteemed the strictest disciplinarian of his "corps," but in no other way distinguished.

I would not like to assert that the imperial proclamations to the army and to the navy, dated Schloss Friedrichskron, June 15, 1888, were composed with von Normann's assistance while impatient crowds surrounded the palace, moaning and crying for news of the good king whom they vaguely supposed to be dead—the Major, with whom I was very well acquainted, has always been discreetly silent on that point;—but these papers are so full of barrack bravado and calm contempt for everything not military as to strongly suggest some such influence; a moral ascendency may indeed have insinuated itself by von Normann's very presence at that particular time.

"Thus we belong to each other,—I and the army,—thus we were born for each other, and thus we will stick to each other forever, be there peace or storm, as God wills it."

And while the army was honored and exalted beyond its proudest expectations on the very day of Frederick's death, the loyal, tax-paying people had to wait for the customary royal greeting, and a word of information on the issues of the day, until the 18th of the month!

To absolve the Kaiser from part of the blame in this matter is not only charitable but just, considering that His

Majesty's supposed *collaborateur*, who died in September, 1890, by his own hand, was, in July, 1888, already afflicted with the species of moral insanity that hastened his demise. After the death of the favorite, medical experts no longer hesitated to say that von Normann's famous rigorousness had really been monomania of vanity, while his brusqueness and cruelty were nothing short of impulsive madness, that furthermore developed a series of foul crimes. The impression, therefore, that the present Kaiser's first official acts were those of a disordered brain, unstatesmanlike, heedless, and offensive, is scarcely without foundation in fact, seeing that a madman stood sponsor to them.

But to return to Queen Victoria's telegram.

It was dated January 28, 1859, twenty-four hours after the eldest son of Crown Prince and Crown Princess Frederick-William had seen the light; twenty-four hours, too, after Berlin witnessed a royal Hohenzollern's race down the Linden in a *Droschke*,—events of the utmost importance both, and the last rather more unusual than the other. The hero of the cab incident was the Regent, Prince of Prussia, afterward King William I, who, hearing the glad tidings of the preservation of his dynasty while engaged at the foreign office, hailed the first public conveyance that came along and proceeded to his son's residence with as much haste and with no more ceremony than any well-to-do burgher might have done.

And, mind you, that happened nearly forty years ago, when the idea that "man starts into being with the baron" held great sway in German-speaking countries, and when the Berlin Court was one of the most formal in existence. Still, with all that, the birth of a king was, and is, rather an ordinary affair in Prussia, quite the reverse of such an event as a death in the royal family.

In England, royal babes have "grand governors" and "deputy governors," a wet nurse and several dry nurses, a first and second "rocker," and days before the event is supposed to come off the great state officials, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, assemble in the palace. And when, at last, the royal mother is taken in labor, these invited witnesses stand in an apartment adjoining the lying-in-room, close to its only door, that must be ajar to make the birth lawful, and all because there is some doubt about the paternity, or maternity if you prefer, of certain British rulers.

How different it is with us! Though our closets be no less stocked with skeletons than those of the Stuarts and Guelphs,—the great Frederick, author of the epigram: "if I have reason to believe that Michael instead of John filled the tart, why should I blame the result, and who cares whether the filling is pigeon or grouse, as long as the pie is good?"—this Hohenzollern, when a youth, was more than once threatened with death by his royal father because that gentleman failed to appreciate the philosophism that it is ridiculous to hunt for the sire of a prince, provided that prince is no blockhead. And that Katte was the lover of Princess Wilhelmina, better known as the Margravine of Bayreuth, is evident from the fact that the King of Prussia, when signing his death-warrant, said: "that scoundrel ought to be burnt with pincers and hanged," which was a mode of execution applicable only to prisoners of noble birth that had defiled the royal bed. These Hohenzollerns, I said, being no better than the Guelphs, might, with even more justification, employ some punctiliousness at the birth of their princes, but they do not.

William was born *à la bourgeois*, and quite economically, a midwife receiving him, and a Court physician, assisted by the then highly-reputed Berlin specialist for woman's

diseases, the late Dr. Martin, looking gravely on after the manner of his kind.

In Germany, you must know, a doctor thinks it beneath himself to take the child, and is supposed to act only in case grave complications arise; nine times out of ten he contents himself by superintending the arrangements and in seeing that the sanitary laws are complied with in all minuteness; the midwife does the work.

In the case of the Crown Princess of Prussia, Fräulein Stahl acted as *sage-femme;* she is now a motherly woman, and still continues her visits to the palace; so I often had occasion to talk with her about the great event of her life.

"Her poor Royal Highness," says the old Fräulein, "was only two months past eighteen years at the time, and very weak and nervous. You see, with her it was not an ordinary case of first motherhood; politics were mixed up in it to a frightful degree, and the poor young thing felt the fate of Europe trembling in her lap, as it were, for our good king was as crazy as a March hare, and twenty-one years had passed since a *hebamme* was called to the Prince Regent's house to bring into the world little Louise, now the Grand Duchess of Baden.

"Our work had been divided as follows: Dr. Martin was to have special care of Her Royal Highness, inasmuch as he was treating her for a nervous malady; the Court physician had to perform the ordinary duties for the all-highest patient, while I was commanded to take the child. But the moment the little one was born a despairing moan from the mother overthrew all these fine dispositions.

"'The Crown Princess is dying'—'she is paying dearly for her son,' whispered the doctors, while working with blanched faces over the prostrate body. Of course, I had to abandon the child momentarily to help them, and when—the Crown Princess having revived after a little while—I

knelt down before the couch on which our heir rested, imagine my fright: he had not yet uttered a cry, nor did he move a muscle. 'Still-born, by Heaven!' I thought. A gesture brought Dr. Martin to my side, and together we labored over the newly-born, I do not know how long, exhausting successively every means ordained by medical books, or practised in the nursery, to bring the child to life."

I will state here, parenthetically, that the Fräulein Stahl of to-day is a very dignified woman, broad and short, and, on the whole, of an excessively grumpy disposition. Very seldom does she smile; but those working with her, or under her directions, claim that her forbidding face hides a nature full of charity and kindness. However true that may be, the old dame recounts her story to the point given, always with the *grandezza* becoming to a person of her worth; but, as she continues, her face broadens with merriment, and her famous basso resounds through the room with a break here and there that comes very near a laugh.

"When everything had been done that in decency could be done," so runs her narrative, "I took that royal youngster under my left arm, and, grabbing a wet towel in my right, began to belabor him in good homely fashion, though the doctors groaned and everybody in the room looked horrified.

"'To the devil with etiquette,' I thought, seeing their grimaces; 'this is a matter of life or death.' So I spanked away, now lighter, now harder, slap, slap, slap, until—the cannons announcing the birth in the Lustgarten yonder had about half finished their official quota of a hundred and one shots—until at last a faint cry broke from the young one's pallid lips.

"He was alive! I had snatched our Prince from the grave for which he seemed destined. The rest was easy

sailing; the doctors again had their innings, and the simple midwife was shoved aside,"—this with a defiant snort.

"But what about the deformed hand and arm?"

"That was discovered only the third or fourth day after," replied Fräulein Stahl; "you see, at first we were all so busy putting life into the Prince, and keeping it in him, that no one thought of examining his limbs. Even when, on January 28, the late Crown Prince showed his son to his relatives, friends, and the assembled royal and princely households, no one observed that anything was wrong. But on the last, or the last but one day of the month, it was noticed that the child could not move his left arm; an investigation was made, and, in the course of it, the surgeons discovered that the elbow joint was dislocated. That, as Your Ladyship knows, is nothing serious in a healthy child. However, in the case of Prince William, the surrounding soft parts were so injured, and the muscles attached in such a condition, that no one dared attempt to set the bone then and there, as should be done in all cases."

Fräulein Stahl has often reiterated the above in the course of our long official acquaintance, and always concluded her remarks with the statement: "I am well aware that the present condition of the Kaiser's arm is attributed to a mistake made by the persons officiating at the accouchement; but," and saying this the old maid's face assumes its most determined look, "if that were not a falsehood, a lie, agreeable to the Emperor and his mother, though,—for even Dr. Hinzpeter, who knows better, repeats it,—if that were not a lie, I say, do you suppose for one moment that I should be in this palace now to cripple more Hohenzollerns?" Saying this, Fräulein Stahl used to bring down her fist forcibly, and conclude: "my own opinion has always been that the child's left forearm was

not properly made up by nature, as, indeed, his whole left side was weak, and is weak to this day.

"Besides, every one in the palace knows that, though his walk is brisk, it is but His Majesty's ever alert exertion that makes it so; if, at any time, the Kaiser ceased thinking of his shortcomings for only a moment, you would see his left leg drag. All his aches and pains, too, locate in his left ear and the whole left side of his head. Now, *Frau Gräfin*, remember what I told you about the Crown Princess's condition. She was agitated by fears and depressed in spirits; tremendous responsibilities weighed upon her mind. Is it to be wondered at that her child was affected? The mother, poor girl! transfused her nervous ailments into the child she was carrying, and all concentrated in its left side. *That* the accoucheurs were, of course, unable to prevent or foresee; besides, they were, as already stated, far too busy completing nature's handiwork by inflating and keeping the Prince's respiratory organs going, to test the inferior parts of his body separately. If, on the other hand, the Prince had been a lusty boy, the dislocated joint would, undoubtedly, have been promptly discovered and nothing would have stood in the way of its immediate correction."

So the chances are that Queen Victoria's telegram was answered in the affirmative.

In the Babel of contradictory statements, Fräulein Stahl's observations have the grateful ring of veracity; indeed, if Dr. Hinzpeter, whom Edouard Simon and other dabblers in imperial biographies so faithfully copy, were right about "that injury to the left arm inflicted by the *accoucheuse*," namely, midwife Stahl, the woman would certainly have been dismissed in disgrace. And if, granting an almost impossible contingency, the late Emperor Frederick had pardoned her, assuredly she would not be tolerated under

the present regime, for William II is a hard master, and as for suffering in his service a person having blasted his life by cruel neglect, that is as entirely out of the question with a man like him as the idea I heard advanced off and on, that he is insensitive to his disablement.

That incubus, on the contrary, is forever in his thoughts, and his apparent unmindfulness of the fact a clever affectation. He wants others to forget that he is a cripple, and therefore ignores his *stigmata*. "He who cannot dissimulate is unfit to reign," said Louis XI.

But, with all that, he is bound to be found napping occasionally; I can very well imagine the Kaiser closing his hand nervously round the hilt of his sabre as he read that tell-tale despatch!

"Is it a fine boy?" Ah, his grandmother had good reason for feeling anxious about this infant in whose veins coursed the blood of the Georges! It is that English consanguinity which he blames and loathes and abhors, not the little woman who received him in her arms already tainted and marked for life.

That, despite his perfect understanding of the case, he allows his own historians to abuse Stahl, is but an instance of royal ingratitude dictated by the same policy that, from the summer of 1887 to the close of the reign of ninety-nine days, branded certain of his father's physicians liars and incompetents.

In this particular instance it happened, however, that the biter was bitten; at the time indicated, Prince William would have gladly seen Mackenzie to the devil; and the findings of his German colleagues, that Frederick III suffered from cancer, a malady said to exclude its victim from the throne, proclaimed from the housetops,—but to-day it is quite another matter. The world's eye, instead of compassionately regarding the sick-room at San Remo,

is riveted upon the stationary or floating or rolling hospitals in which he himself dwells as in a glass house,—hence the "remaking" of history, the dissemination of historical untruths at all hazards!

But they must not be too replete with details. Thus I once heard the Kaiser, in conversation with Her Majesty, roundly abuse Hinzpeter for saying in his book: "the Prussian army never admitted a young man physically so little fit to become a brilliant and dashing cavalry officer as William."

The criticism was passed shortly after the appearance of Hinzpeter's "Kaiser William II, a Sketch from Life," in the fall of 1888, and the Emperor, after warning his Frau against letting the volume fall into the children's hands, meaning the elder boys, continued: "our German philosophers never know where to stop; whether they write truths or lies, they are bound to compromise and expose their friends without ever realizing it."

This fateful left arm the Kaiser hugs closely to his body, allowing the hand, which is not deformed, but puny like a child's, to rest against his waist, or upon his hip, if on horseback. Any one following the German papers will probably remember that the official journals issue *ballons d'essai* from time to time to ascertain public sentiment in respect to the introduction of a belt for army officers, an article of accoutrement foreign to the Prussian uniform and out of harmony with its general style. As the Empress Eugenie re-established the crinoline in the sixties to hide her interesting condition, so William wants to change military dress to find a convenient resting-place for his poor left hand and arm, which, being about six inches shorter than the right, would attach to a belt unostentatiously. But, alas! the majority of officers feign to regard those re-occurring proposals as manœuvres of mercenary army contractors, and treat them with fine scorn, so that

William, unwilling to own his secret reason for the innovation sought for, must go without relief.

Those are gloomy days in the palace when the pros and cons of opinion on the subject are read by the Emperor, who, after carefully perusing the clippings, recognizes the repeated failure of his pet scheme. It puts him into the mood for smashing things, and his famous speech to the Brandenburgers[1] on March 5, 1890, was made under just such circumstances.

Of course, he could use the regulation silver scarf for the purpose; but that is only permissible with gala uniform, and to wear it always would be awkward as well as expensive.

As already intimated, the fingers of the crippled hand are movable, for, although the head of the radius of the forearm does not set properly into the condyles of the humerus, the limb is not altogether inert. There is consequently no reason for doubting the late Major von Normann's assertion that the Kaiser clutched his sword with the left hand. I have seen him do the same thing quite often when angry. But while he can take hold of an article, he cannot for the life of him lift it. For instance, he holds the reins in his left hand, but is powerless to direct the horse except with his right or his knees.

Without exaggeration it may be said, that, next to the stricken man, the imperial valets, five of whom, two ward robemen and two *Kammerdiener*, are always on duty to dress, undress, and reuniform their master, suffer most on account of this infirmity. One of them is the *intimus* of

[1] Speech at the dinner of the Brandenburg Provincial Diet, at the Hotel Kaiserhof, Berlin: "Those who will support me are heartily welcome, whoever they are, but those obstructing my policy I will smash to pieces."

Her Majesty's *Kammerdiener* Nolte, and makes him the confidant of his troubles.

"We would not mind the work in the least," I heard him say once, "would not care if the Emperor changed his uniform ten, instead of three or four times per day, it's the fear of injuring his lame hand that makes us nervous and gradually wears away our usefulness. And, besides, we must always be prepared to forestall the collapse of the all-highest master when he balances himself on his left leg, as is his wont sometimes, when he is in a hurry to put on a different pair of trousers." And, after thinking awhile, the man added: "if they would only introduce for all troops, horse, foot, and artillery, not excepting the navy, a uniform pair of pantaloons, one-half of our cares would be removed, but this endless variety is killing us and will some day, I fear, lead to a catastrophe."

His Majesty's right hand is massive and ugly in appearance, ugly, too, when clasping that of a friend. Before I was presented to him, Court-marshal von Liebenau warned me against His Royal Highness's mighty grip; but, though I went through the ordeal with teeth set, I could hardly suppress an outcry, which amused the Prince exceedingly.

How proud the Emperor is of his personal strength is evident from the fact that he promptly adopted the simile suggested to him several years ago, when a foreign correspondent likened his fist to the "terrible right" of the then champion of the world, John L. Sullivan, whereupon his sister of Meiningen, who adores strong men, remarked: "I hope Sullivan has not the bad taste to wear as many rings as my brother."

This weakness is, however, to some extent excusable, as it is thus the Kaiser tries to hide a number of conspicuous moles which disfigure his hand. In this he partly succeeds,

while in spots the glittering diamonds and rubies only tend to emphasize the blemishes.

I dare say very few people have a correct notion of the Emperor's height, for, as he is seldom seen without a helmet terminating in a point, the public is mystified, and even close observers are apt to be deceived. In the palace this question is never openly discussed, but I heard the Kaiserin tell overinquisitive Prince Eitel Fritz once or twice that his father measured five feet eight inches. That, I am sure, is a mistake; five feet five or six inches is the highest measure that even Adjutant Count Moltke, who has a very sure eye in such matters, gives him. Be that as it may, he cuts a respectable enough figure, holding himself as straight as an arrow, his uniforms being fashioned to correct the traces of *embonpoint* that develop from time to time in spite of rigid bodily exercise incessantly kept up.

The numerous newspaper persons who talk glibly about the Kaiser's "cancerous" ear trouble have, I imagine, information on the point that is more or less inaccessible to those in daily attendance upon His Majesty, for whether the dread malady, hereditary with the Hohenzollerns, has settled in that organ or not, is still an open question even with William's own physicians. Improbable it is not.

Let us reflect a moment. It was Louise of Strelitz, "sharing with Marie Antoinette the sad pre-eminence of beauty and misfortune," who carried carcinoma into the Prussian camp; the English escaped that doom only because economical George III preferred Caroline of Brunswick for his son, her dowry being larger by a few thousand Thalers than the Mecklenburger's. There was theory in that madman's madness, and no mistake.

All Queen Louise's portraits are remarkable for a scarf the royal lady invariably wears under her chin; even her

oldest portraits and busts exhibited in the Berlin Hohenzollern Museum, no matter whether the Queen is in Court dress or ordinarily gowned, have this distinction. The scarf, it is said, was worn to conceal the marks of an operation necessitated by a swelling of the glands, and that is undoubtedly authentic, but it is also true that in this very spot the cancer that killed her, eventually developed. I have this information from descendants of old-time royal servants in the employ of the late Emperor William, Louise's last surviving son. The Queen died of the disease at Hohenzieritz, her father's estate, in 1810.

That Emperor Frederick perished of cancer of the throat even Dr. Mackenzie had to admit. Therefore, if one may say so without offence, it would be in the line of natural development if William II, supposing he inherited the malady, were attacked by it in the neighborhood of his throat. But it must not be forgotten that cancer is thought by some authorities to be untransmissible.

The only time that His Majesty's ear trouble was mentioned in the palace was, as far as I can remember, at the death of Henry XI of Reuss-Gera, son of the Hereditary Prince Henry XXIV (if numbers must be given) and Princess Elise of Hohenlohe, a cousin of the Empress on the mother's side. The little one died November 4, 1891, of scarlet fever, we thought, and the Empress remarked: "I trust the Kaiser will not hear of the cause of death, for it always makes him uneasy."

"Why, has His Majesty not had scarlet fever?" I inquired, looking up from the despatch I was writing at my mistress's command and which requested the Reuss Court-marshal to send more particulars.

"Of course," said the Kaiserin rather hesitatingly, "and in its most malignant form, too. How could you live here several years without hearing of it?"

As Her Majesty's manner convinced me that it would not be agreeable to her to go into details, I curbed my curiosity until some time later I met Count Seckendorf, for many years chamberlain to the Empress Frederick. This nobleman enjoys Her Majesty's supreme confidence and knows all the family secrets.

"Your Ladyship did well not to press this point," said the courtier, "for the Kaiser would be very angry if he heard of any such discussion. As a matter of fact, that scarlet-fever story—for it is a *story*—is reserved for use in a contingency that has not yet arisen, I am happy to say."

"You put me on the rack, Count."

"Others are there already and dare not complain," replied the *Kammerherr*, with a short, satirical laugh not devoid of a tinge of sadness,—"ay, on the rack of public opinion, of the most cold-blooded insinuation and of reproof direct. Do you remember," he continued, "when a certain august person snubbed the Crown Prince's, afterward the Emperor's, English physician because that gentleman had refused to take his cue from the seditious Bismarck and *Junker* clique when reporting upon a disease that played such a part in a state tragedy, then on the boards? To-day, opposite views on the same subject are trumps, and persons insisting that a specified malady goes with the crown of Prussia are publicly disowned and officially guillotined."

"I know, I know, but the scarlet-fever story?"

"As I have had the honor of already intimating: if the condition of Frederick's successor becomes alarming at any time in consequence of his ear trouble, Your Ladyship will see it in all the official papers."

It took no little persuasion to induce Graf Seckendorf to satisfy my curiosity, that had increased rather than abated

during the last quarter of an hour. "The *official communiqué*," he said at last, "will read something like this:

"When His Majesty, as a young man, was stricken with scarlet fever, his mother, the Empress Frederick, insisted upon treating the patient after a custom prevailing in some parts of England. The feverish boy was subjected many times daily to ice-cold ablutions, while his body and bed linen were continually changed, in consequence of which an acute cold settled in the left ear, which has ever since irritated the youth and man."

"Then," concluded the Count, "will follow a learned treatise showing that the Kaiser has water, not tumors, on the brain."

I had to laugh at the *bonmot*, though immediately afterward both of us were ashamed, the one for uttering, the other for applauding, so ill-natured a remark. We also looked about us to see that no one had, perchance, overheard our conversation.

There is, I repeat it, as yet no evidence to justify the worst suspicions regarding the Emperor's ear trouble, but the fact that the organ is regularly treated with antiseptics to arrest putrefaction seems to indicate the presence of gangrenous inflammation. Quite frequently the Kaiser attends to this himself, and if he has had a particularly bad day, the physician on duty or the body physician operates on him. But in the course of years the Empress, likewise, has become an adept at bringing relief to her husband by these means; she also handles an apparatus for pumping air out of the sick ear, or clearing its passages by blowing air through them. This instrument, which is fitted with a long rubber tube and a spiral trumpet, hangs at the side of the bedstead in their Majesties' joint chamber and a duplicate is in the Kaiser's own toilet-room, while a third forms part of the travelling equipage. The bedrooms on the yacht

Hohenzollern and on the imperial saloon train are also fitted with ear-pumps.

Harassed in this wise by maladies of the most serious character, the Emperor can scarcely be blamed for taking excessive precautions against contagion. That he lives the greater part of the year in the inconveniently situated Neues Palais, which, moreover, will never be a thoroughly modern residence for reasons that will be explained in another chapter, is mainly due to its solitary position at the end of the town. At the Marble Palace, where the imperial couple used to spend the summer while waiting for William's patent of general and finally for the crown, it was quite different. There they had neighbors, one of them the Hereditary Prince of Schoenburg, *chef d'escadron* of the Guard Hussars, who lived in a villa opposite the Neuer Garten.

Coming down to breakfast on November 18, 1888, the Kaiser learned that His Grace had died of diphtheria a few hours before.

"Diphtheria?" cried William, turning a shade paler than is his wont in the morning,—"there seems to be something unhealthy in the air hereabouts. Let the chamberlain on duty be informed that my things must be packed and sent to Berlin at once."

"But the residential quarters in the (Berlin) Schloss are yet far from finished," interposed Herr von Liebenau.

"Never mind, there will be some corner where I can sleep and eat without running the risk of infection." And seeing that the adjutant still waited, he added, anticipating a question which etiquette forbade to be asked: "all my things,—I am going to move."

That settled, His Majesty quieted down, and when, shortly afterward, the Empress arrived, he simply said: "Dona, I am going to Berlin and this house will see me

no more." Auguste Victoria was thunderstruck, but seeing the husband determined, she dared not question him. So their meal passed in silence while visions of domestic storms, of irreparable displeasure, even of a *maîtresse en titre* perhaps, chased through Her Majesty's brain. And when, half an hour later, I entered her room to ask if the valets might go to the bed-chamber and remove the Kaiser's clothes,—the Empress often returns to that room after breakfast, and naturally dislikes meeting men-servants there,—I found my mistress in tears, bewailing a fate that was as yet a mystery.

"Do you know why the Kaiser is going?" she said at last, after looking around to see that we were alone. The confession, for such it turned out to be, evidently deeply moved Her Majesty, as her eyes streamed with tears. I could not understand it at first. "Of course," I replied, the question having been repeated, "His Majesty has heard of the death across the way, and, being so near the Schoenburgs, he is afraid that diphtheria might break out in the palace."

A sigh of relief escaped the imperial lady. She scarcely allowed me to finish. "Is the Hereditary Prince dead?" she exclaimed, with almost a joyful ring in her voice. Then changing her attitude, she added: "why have I not been informed of this? I might have been spared an unhappy half-hour, and, besides, I should have sent my condolences to Princess Lucie."

William was as good as his word; his state papers published that very day were dated "Schloss, Berlin," etc. and ever since the Marble Palace has ceased, as it were, to figure in contemporary history.

The Kaiser was right in surmising that his thousand-windowed palace in the capital would afford him lodgings of some sort; but as his own apartments, as well as the

majority of the other suites, were undergoing alterations, he was obliged to make his quarters in the so-called von Kleist chambers, said to have been once inhabited by Princess Amalia's first lady-in-waiting, companion and confidante, the Baroness von Kleist. They are exceedingly beautiful, far more so than any of the gilded modern rooms that *fin-de-siècle* Berlin taste has furnished, yet at the same time lack even the most ordinary conveniences.

I was at the Meiningen Villa, in the Thiergarten, on some business of Her Majesty's, when the Princess brought the news. "I have just come from my big brother,"—she always speaks of the Kaiser thus,—"and what do you think? I found him installed in the Kleist apartments,—at the Kleist rooms, which the White Lady is said to haunt," she said to her *Hofdame*, in so loud a voice that others, as well as myself, could not avoid hearing it.

"'I am glad Auguste has had her baby,' I said to the Kaiser at once," continued Princess Charlotte, "for, as you know, von Kleist's child born in this apartment was disfigured by a terrible birth-mark on the nose, the broom of *La Balayeuse.*"

"And who may that be, Your Royal Highness?"

"The White Lady, of course, who used to announce her coming by vigorously sweeping the corridors. On that account, Frederick the Great dubbed her 'the sweeper,' or, in his beloved French, *La Balayeuse.* And that," continued the Princess, with a loud laugh, as if some hilarious *bonmot* had just seen the light in her luminous brain,—"that was, after all, a fitting designation, for, *sub rosâ*, the White Lady of the Hohenzollerns is no lady at all. I have just inspected her favorite abode, and, I assure you, there is neither a bath-tub nor a toilet to be found there."

Although the Empress knew of the objectionable features of her husband's temporary abode (if she had not, her

fond sister-in-law's witticism would have enlightened her, for, whenever Her Royal Highness gets off a joke, Auguste Victoria is informed of it by Charlotte's friends almost as promptly as by her enemies), she insisted upon following William within twice twenty-four hours. But the Emperor, pretending to be very busy with his speech for the opening of the Reichstag on November 22, would not see her until the following day. Now everybody knows that speeches from the throne are composed by the Chancellor, in this case by Prince Bismarck,—hence it was clear that William had some other reason for absenting himself. As a matter of fact, he had heard that Fräulein von Gersdorff, Dame of the Court, was suffering from a sore throat, and though her quarters were not in the Marble Palace, but in the gentlewomen's pavilion, situated in the park, he evidently feared that Her Majesty might have come in contact with her. And not until he was reassured by myself—he obtained the information in a very diplomatic fashion, I must say—did he emerge from his seclusion.

After I had withdrawn, Court-marshal von Liebenau was summoned.

"No more cases of diphtheria in Potsdam, I hope?" said the Kaiser, in his most imperious style.

"None that I know of, Your Majesty."

"That you know of? My dear sir, that means either that you are out of touch with your department or that cases of illness are secreted. At any rate, you will be good enough to telegraph to the Marble Palace that all persons of the suite, or in the royal service, who show any signs of throat trouble must be removed to a hospital at once, without the slightest delay. These are my strictest orders."

One of the Empress's favorite wardrobewomen, Frau Schnase, fell a victim to William's relentless anxiety on

that occasion. Not being on duty for several days, she had remained in Potsdam, and, by the Court physician's advice, had taken a perspiratory treatment to reduce a swelling of the glands, very common among certain classes in Germany, so that at 11 o'clock that night she was in the midst of a healthy sweat and sound sleep, when the Major-domo awakened her to say that by "all-highest order" she must leave *instanter*.

Protest being out of the question, a closed *Droschke* was procured, and the shivering patient was rolled off to the nearest hospital through the wintry streets.

"No room," reported the night-watch, when the driver summoned him.

"But she is one of Her Majesty's personal attendants."

Of course that made a difference, and, after some more discussion, Frau Schnase was given a cot in the pauper's ward, third class, next to one in which a poor creature was just receiving extreme unction.

The Queen's wardrobewoman was a healthy girl, and recovered not only from the horrors of her unusual experience, but likewise from an illness she caught while exposed to the deadly exhalations of the sorry environment forced upon her. After a month or so, she was back at the Schloss; but, daring to complain of the treatment that had been meted out to her, such biting sarcasm and contempt were heaped upon poor Schnase that she preferred to resign.

With our knowledge of the Kaiser's peculiar predisposition to diseases of the throat, this care exercised to guard against infection would seem quite proper, though excessively hard on others, had it not, in the course of years, become a mania. Assuredly, no one blamed His Majesty for postponing the Würtemburg manœuvres in the summer of 1893, when cholera was raging;—in those days all the

royal servants were treated to unsugared tea as the standing beverage, which caused not a little indignation in the palace, the flunkies and maids insisting that the Emperor should make the tea palatable, if he forbade them to drink anything else; but it is quite another thing when the Kaiser refuses to confer with state officials because some member of their family might be indisposed. Interests of the state are liable to suffer seriously through hallucinations of that sort, and if it were not for the love I bear my country, I might cite instances of international importance showing errors and inexcusable lapses for which this strange fancy is responsible.

The Empress, who faithfully copies all her husband's fads, either because she admires them or because she fears his displeasure, is as bad as he. Her Majesty frequently causes the discharge of servants for neglecting to report some trifling sickness in the family; and members of the royal household not living in the castle can enjoy a holiday at any time by simply furnishing a doctor's certificate stating that somebody with whom they are domiciled in the city is ill. This applies to the Kaiser's adjutant-generals, as well as to the chamberlains, equerries, dames of the palace, chasseurs, coachmen, cooks, and scullions. More than once have I seen His Majesty abruptly start away from a person with whom he happened to be conversing at a reception or ball, leaving the unhappy lady or gentleman speechless and crushed, because of an innocent admission that a son or a daughter, or perhaps an uncle, had the measles or a cold. At the very mention of the fact the war-lord fled like the lion, hearing a cock crow.

Once I found Frau von Kotze in tears behind some shrub in the White Hall, while all around her dancing was going on. "What is the matter with Your Ladyship?" I inquired; "can I be of service to you?"

"No, thank you, Madame la Comtesse," she sobbed; "but to think that he said that to *me!*"

"Who is he, and what did he say?"

"The Kaiser, of course! When he heard that my boy was ill, he remarked, turning on his heel: 'How dare you come to my house under such circumstances?'"

That, needless to say, happened before the anonymous letter scandal, and at the time when Frau von Kotze prided herself upon her particularly friendly relations with His Majesty.

But the most absurd instances of the Kaiser's mania for precaution is afforded by the case of little Henry of Reuss, already mentioned. As soon as his death became known, William requested Her Majesty to have disinfected all the dresses that she had taken to Gera when attending the baptism of the prince, several months before, although he knew at the time that His little Highness did not die of an infectious disease, as at first thought, but of *hæmorrhœa petechialis*, a sort of scurvy.

CHAPTER II

Since the days when Spanish etiquette prescribed a special accoutrement for kings going to the connubial chamber (Charles V, we are told, "carried a naked sword in his right, a torch in his left hand, and a bottle of water under his arm, but not for drinking purposes"), royal ladies and gentlemen have become considerably like ordinary folks in respect to the common decencies of life, and if they "turn tigers, it is not owing to their bringing up and habits," as the last Charles of France once said.

Napoleon, the first of modern kings, insisted upon keeping imperial Marie Louise under lock and key after she had retired; the only entrance to her room was through a chamber in which the first lady-in-waiting slept, whose bed, moreover, had to be curtainless, so that the Emperor, when passing, might see whether she was alone; but in Potsdam and Berlin the heads of a mighty nation sleep together as unceremoniously and as comfortably, let us hope, as any Herr and Frau Burgomaster or citizen of even lesser importance in the Fatherland.

How often have I been importuned to allow visitors just one peep into this *sanctum sanctorum* where nature's alchemy triumphs over a great ancestor's injunction against "burdening the nation with useless beggar princes;" but, of course, no such request could be granted, even were it accompanied by the offer of the richest diamond in the world. Their Majesties' bedroom opens, by a richly

ornamented folding-door, into the Kaiserin's study on the second floor of the Neues Palais, and is connected with the toilet and bath closets belonging to the respective suites. It has two high windows, and is lofty and spacious, but sadly lacks the harmony in color and general furnishings that is the main charm of a really beautiful apartment, such as this is intended to be. Indeed, the Kaiserin tired of it long ago, and would gladly exchange its treasures, one and all, for new things, though the room was fitted up entirely after her own suggestion. What first upset the Empress was the ultra graceful and exquisite style of Neu-Glienecke, the property of her brother-in-law and sister, Prince and Princess Frederick Leopold of Prussia, the richest of the Hohenzollerns. This castle, situated near Potsdam, was rebuilt soon after William's enthronement, and, having thoroughly redecorated and refitted the palace in the latest and most sumptuous manner, their Royal Highnesses gave a house-warming in the summer of 1891. From this Her Majesty returned in high dudgeon, and, on entering her own bedroom, where I was busy arranging some flowers, she exclaimed: "How *pauvre* it all looks! If one judged mine and Louise's positions from our surroundings, I might be taken for a mere appanaged princess, while my sister would easily pass for the Kaiserin. She has everything of the latest,—the German Empress must content herself with the remnants of centuries scattered among Berlin-made show-pieces."

Kings, after all, are but men, and the Glienecke housewarming cost William exactly 80,000 marks, though the Kaiserin would fain have seen him expend ten times that amount. As it was, he consented to the renewal of the bedroom hangings and upholstery, which are of the heaviest damask, the groundwork being a peculiar sandy gray with large yellow flowers in bold relief, a pattern and material

that connoisseurs intuitively associate with the graceful and superb age of Louis XIV or XV. The original was, in fact, a present of Madame Pompadour to the great Frederick, for at one period of their lives they were on friendly terms. Of course, by the time it passed into William's hands it had faded; but in the mellow of age it was still exceedingly beautiful, far more so than the new draperies, though they are supposed to be exact imitations of the old French example.

But those old silks, that in their early days probably witnessed the jealous quarrels between the Margravine of Bayreuth and her doltish husband, and heard Queen Ulrique (of Sweden) recount to Princess Amalia her disputes with those "contumacious senators of hers," who once demanded sight and count of the crown jewels:—"there, *voilà*, there they are, view them, count them, lock them up; never more will I wear one of them," said her proud Majesty,—but those old silks were no more beautiful with the charm historic associations lend to things than the Elizabethan bed that stood, until the summer of 1892, in the alcove nearest the door.

A right royal couch was that in which, during the first years of their reign, the Emperor and Empress slept,—magnificent and stately, a fitting companion-piece, with its canopy and curtains, to that world-famed four-poster, the Bed of Ware, which could be enclosed on all sides by tapestries, and whereto the King and Queen retired in full sight of all their retainers lying around on the straw-covered floor with doublets and petticoats for pillows, and "full of good wine each mother's son and daughter of them."

How the Kaiser liked this old bed, with its heraldic designs, and upholstered side-pieces, whereon he could sit comfortably, smoking a cigarette and reading a novel by the light of the single wax candle standing on a little table

near his end of the couch! but, lo! "those Frederick Leopolds" acquired modern English bedsteads, and, womanlike, Auguste Victoria would not allow her sister to eclipse her in being up to date.

So one fine day the *lying-in* beds were ordered home from Charlottenburg castle, their usual storage-place, and, the antique couch being sent up-stairs, these things of brass and the mode were put up near the windows, to the intense alarm of the physicians, who feared they had made another miscalculation, and of relatives and friends who anticipated a catastrophe like that following the Pasewalk review, mentioned elsewhere. Of course, it was a false alarm, and our pretty Princess Louise was "regularly born" on September 13, 1892.

That the Emperor, at the bottom of his heart, has his doubts as to the propriety of using a common factory-made bedstead as the cradle of kings, is evident from the fact that for some time these brass affairs had to be removed every morning, while in their place the Elizabethan couch was set up; but the order, which evoked no end of dissatisfaction among the servants, gradually fell into disuse, and nowadays the triumph of brass over stately splendor is complete—in the bedroom, at least.

As every domestic arrangement in the palace is fashioned with a view to insure the preservation of the Kaiser's health, the doors and windows near the imperial bed are doubly screened by heavy *portières*, summer and winter; for the faintest possibility of draughts is dreaded, and even the down quilts and blankets are so fastened at the bottom and sides that their Majesties must needs crawl into bed one leg at a time, there being only a breadth of about twenty inches left open.

The Hohenzollern household never enjoyed a reputation for more than superficial opulence, and the paucity of its

linen has often been the subject of ill-natured comment at other courts,—a state of affairs which the present Emperor's English mother tried to correct by large purchases during the reign of ninety-nine days; but when, after Frederick's death, trouble arose as to who was to foot the bills for these extravagances,— Court-marshal von Liebenau designated them so in his *junker-like* contempt for insular notions of nicety,—Her Majesty removed most of the newly-acquired house-linen, and her successors, in consequence, often experience the chagrin of sleeping between sheets only partly fresh, especially in winter, when there are difficulties about drying linen. To be sure, Auguste Victoria has laid down a rule, stipulating that the royal couch be furnished with clean linen every day in the year; but as there is only a very limited stock to draw from, it happens sometimes that only one clean sheet is obtainable, and, in that case, the upper sheet of the two used on the previous night is taken for the under. Whenever that happens, Her Majesty is exceedingly anxious that the Kaiser should not find it out, for, as may be well imagined, such evidence of penury would be likely to jar on his notions of divine appointment. If one thinks himself little short of Deity, it must be exceedingly embarrassing to discover that one's linen chest affords only a single sheet at certain seasons.

Before the imperial couple retire, the household goes through a series of routine work. Above all, His Majesty's nickel warming-pan must be heated to the proper degree and placed at his, the right, side of the bed. That is done all the year round, except in July and August. Next, folding screens are so placed as to surround the bed on all sides, and woe to the chamber-woman who forgets to draw any of the numerous curtains, *portières*, and other devices for excluding a breath of air. For cases of emergency, a pair of long woollen stockings, white cloth knickerbockers,

jack-boots, a flannel-lined pea-jacket, soft hat, and gloves must be placed ready on one corner of the lounge that is at the foot of the bed, and a similar "accident toilet" is provided for Her Majesty.

Finally, the night-lamp needs looking after,—a most unroyal *meuble* of tin enclosing a glass bowl filled with oil and water in equal parts and containing a Parisian light. Over that is placed a china cup with gruel, which must be steaming hot when His Majesty enters.

Undressed is the Kaiser by two of his five valets in his *chambre de toilette*, from which he steps into the joint bedroom, attired in a single garment and bath-slippers, the Empress going through her part of the performance in her own chamber.

While the room contains some exquisite pieces of furniture, it can, as stated, scarcely be considered in good taste. The lounge and some *fauteuils* are covered in red, while two sofas are of the color of the wall-hangings and draperies. Then there are wicker chairs with silk cushions edged with mulle, a crystal chandelier and bronze candelabra, a blue carpet, and vases and flower-pots of different styles, hand-painted or majolica ware, besides Japanese tables, bamboo chairs, and masterpieces of Boule and *marqueterie*,—a "regular second-hand dealer's shop," as the Empress's mother, the Dowager Duchess of Schleswig, once said in one of her bright moments.

The wicker chairs, by the way, have a history. In September, 1894, when the Kaiser was absent at the manœuvres with the King of Saxony, Her Majesty, to kill time, which never hangs more heavily upon her hands than when her lord is away from home, conceived the idea of painting the basket settees a bright lilac. It was to be a surprise for William upon his return.

"Before we go to bed, I will ask the Kaiser to sit down in his favorite seat for a moment, and then I will suddenly turn up the lamps, exhibiting my work. Won't he be pleased?" Her Majesty had remarked to Fräulein von Gersdorff.

The latter acquiesced, as a matter of course, and both ladies started in upon the task at once, spoiling many pairs of gloves, besides their dresses and a carpet worth a whole regiment of wicker chairs. But this mattered little, seeing that, after several cans of mixed paint and a bottle of turpentine had been consumed, the *chef-d'œuvre* was complete. It was the day before William was expected back.

"But will they be dry in time?" asked the Dame of the Court, Gräfin Keller, when all the ladies of Her Majesty had been called together to view this first attempt at household decoration.

"Certainly," said the Kaiserin, with a laugh; "*Kammerdiener* Lück made inquiries for me at the paint store, and I followed the directions to the letter."

Next evening their Majesties retired in high glee, being well satisfied at their reunion, and the Empress's little programme seems to have worked to perfection till—but let Her Majesty tell her own story.

"No sooner were the lights on," reported Auguste Victoria to her first Lady, Countess Brockdorff, the following day, "and while I myself was settling down in the second chair, than I saw the Emperor start up half surprised, half angry, with his hands and other portions of his body thickly besmeared with pigment that, I felt to my horror, also adhered to my body. With the Kaiser, you know, cleanliness is almost a passion, and his repugnance to coming into contact with anything like wet paint is so great that he cannot help losing his temper.

"'My dear,' he said, 'this is a sorry joke.' And neither explanations nor excuses were of the slightest avail.

"'Ring for turpentine.' That is all he would say.

"I awakened Haake, and told her to order Madame von Larisch to send up a bottle of the stuff; but, needless to say, she had none on hand. Then the Emperor demanded that one of the body gendarmes ride into town and fetch a bottle. Like a simpleton, he awakened the apothecary, only to be told that he must go to a drug store. Drug stores, as you know, have no night-bells, and are not obliged to serve customers after the ordinary closing time. It took the gendarme a full hour to get what he wanted, and even then he was obliged to invoke aid from a military patrol.

"The next thirty or forty minutes I spent in cleansing my lord's legs, arms, and hands, and afterward poor Haake had to do the same for me. It was the most miserable night I ever experienced."

While, as stated, this imperial bedroom is remarkable neither for great splendor nor simplicity,—we expect to encounter the one or the other extreme in such a place,—it is not without psychological interest. There is the Emperor's *table de nuit*, for instance, whose upper drawer, at night always half open, contains a self-cocking revolver, fully loaded.

If one reflects how unfamiliar such displays are to women in Germany,—they do not in the least mind sabres or guns,—the Empress's alarm at this thing of ivory, steel, and silver may be imagined. How often she has pleaded with William to discard the weapon, but the Kaiser insists upon having it near him. "If Alexander of Bulgaria had slept with a six-shooter, he might have founded a dynasty and perhaps be still alive," is one of his arguments,—a queer one, to say the least. As a matter of

fact, the sister of one of the conspirators who conducted him to Reni, August 21, 1886, kept Alexander company during the eventful night when abdication was forced upon him, and this young lady was, under the circumstances, certainly better protection than any number of weapons. A revolver might have been brushed aside; with a girl, vigorously taking her lover's part, it was not so easy a matter. Another gruesome object in the room is the so-called *Sterbekommode*, an old mahogany chest of drawers, the top of which is loaded with emblems of death and sorrow.

In the centre stands a large engraving, in a brown carved frame, representing Our Saviour with the Crown of Thorns, his eyes looking heavenward, while at the sides are placed portraits of the Emperors William I and Frederick III, of the late Empress Auguste, and Ludwig of Bavaria, all clad in shrouds. These pictures were made especially for His Majesty, and are not procurable anywhere. Strange to say, the morbid *memento mori* has to be set up in every imperial residence where the Court stops for any length of time. It is carted from Potsdam to Berlin, from there to Wilhelmshoehe, to Kiel, to Hubertusstock, to the Yacht Hohenzollern, and to the Rominten hunting-box.

The Kaiser is a good husband, and is adored by his wife. That Auguste Victoria's love for him is only equalled by her fear of him is perhaps not his fault. He was heir to a mighty crown when he married her,—she, the daughter of a penniless pretender who had to sign away his hereditary rights to the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein before the engagement was ratified by the old Kaiser, and Prussia granted him the indemnity of $75,000 per year, on which the family is now struggling along.

The consciousness of this humiliating bargain on the one hand, and of William's overpowering egotism on the other,

have sufficed to make a wife, constitutionally not without energy, like wax in his hand.

Sitting one night in the Royal box at the Opera House with Duke Gunther of Schleswig, I heard him laugh immoderately at the remark of a stage hero, who, being asked: "Do you ever quarrel?" briskly replied: "No, not if I have my own way."

"It reminds me so much of my beloved brother-in-law and sister," said His Highness; "they never fight, because he sees to it that his slightest whims are obeyed, nay, more, anticipated."

That fits the case exactly: William forever enforcing his own will, his notions, his idiosyncrasies, and downright crazes by sheer force of sublime egomania; the Kaiserin perpetually in a flutter to carry out his demands and make everybody else dance to the imperial piper's tune! Only in one respect does he consult Her Majesty's wishes without reference to his own inclination; namely, by hardly ever absenting himself from the marriage-bed when at home. Yet this seeming subservience may be, after all, but the outcome of a desire for numerous progeny, for the penny-a-liner's "continuous sick man" is inordinately proud of his sireship.

The imperial couple sleep together on healthy days as well as when sickness befalls one or the other, and even the near approach of Her Majesty's confinement makes no difference in this decidedly bourgeois arrangement, to which, by the way, all ladies of the Holstein family with whom I have come into contact are addicted.

On a summer day of 1892, a month or so before Princess Louise was born, the Empress expressed a wish to inspect her lying-in chambers at the Marble Palace, and previous to driving out gave orders that *Kammerdiener* Brachwitz should attend her there, while Countess Brockdorff and

"So Completely Did She Consider Our Class a Figurehead"

myself were to be of the party. The palace, at that time, was uninhabited, and Brachwitz met us at the door. Besides him, two other men were present, the *castellan* and the chasseur.

"Herr Brachwitz," said the Kaiserin, catching sight of the man and completely ignoring the character of her audience, "a word with you before I forget it. His Majesty will sleep with me as usual to the last minute, and only after the confinement will he occupy his own room. So be careful to put all the Kaiser's things in our joint bedroom, in the rear of the grand *salon*, where I intend to lie my weeks (*wo ich Wochen liege*)."

The *Kammerdiener*, who is a modest fellow, and, moreover, unmarried, was speechless, and so taken back that he failed to answer the obligatory: "At your command, Your Majesty." However, in the evening, when, as is customary in great houses, the incident was passed in review in the servants' hall, together with other happenings of the day, one of his colleagues remarked: "That's a mere trifle, Herr Brachwitz. When I was in the service of Countess O—— (I omit the name, for the lady might object to its use in connection with this story), Her Ladyship thought nothing of changing her chemise before me, so completely did she regard one of our class as a figurehead."

Even His Majesty's terror of disease capitulates before the alcove.

In June, 1891, when the Prince of Naples's visit to the Neues Palais was announced, the Empress was ill with nettle-rash, and had to take to her bed on the very day the diminutive, monkey-like Savoyard arrived at Wildpark. As it happened, the Dowager Duchess of Schleswig and the Duchess Frederick Ferdinand of Glücksburg had been with us during the last two or three weeks, and by arrangement

they were to withdraw upon Victor Emanuel's arrival to make room for the Empress's younger, unmarried sister, Princess Feo, who was to meet His Royal Highness with a view to a betrothal. The old lady, for a wonder, retired in good order, and Duchess Caroline Mathilda's things were at the station,—Her Highness wanted to get home, as she expected her fifth child by the end of August; but when she came to bid the Kaiserin good-bye, Her Majesty had changed the programme.

"For God's sake, don't leave me!" she cried; "you have no idea how unhappy I am. The Kaiser will be busy all the time with his guest, and, despite my illness, I shall see him only at night."

"But, sister," mildly suggested the Duchess, "you will not compel Willy to sleep with you when you have the fever!"

"And why not!" bristled up Auguste Victoria; "the doctor tells me the rash is not infectious, and I insist upon having my husband near me whether there are visitors or not."

The usual *fêtes* were held, Princess Feo, wearing some of Her Majesty's diamonds, doing the honors, while the Duchess did not show herself at all, but took her meals in the Empress's study, bed, or dressing room, wherever the distinguished patient could be induced to remain for any length of time, for she roamed from one apartment to the other in a vain attempt to obtain comfort from the burning, itching, and irritation peculiar to her malady. The poor Empress looked awful; in the course of a few hours her whole appearance had so changed that she would not allow herself to be seen by any of her gentlemen in attendance, and gave strict orders that no male servant was to come near her apartments. Her face was swollen, and all over her body the skin was covered with an eruption

tingling with fever. It was so bad that even dinner etiquette was set aside, and the chamberwoman and upstairs maid had to wait on the royal sisters, and acquitted themselves awkwardly enough, you may be sure.

Finally, after the itching surface had been dusted with flour, and after the use of vigorous emetics, the rash disappeared as suddenly as it had come, and the Kaiserin was able to emerge from her retirement shortly before His Italian Royal Highness's departure. While she was being dressed for dinner, I was sent for to see if the *décolleté* waist did not perchance disclose marks of the illness just passed.

"I won my bet," said my mistress, triumphantly, after acknowledging my compliments on her appearance.

"What bet, if it pleases Your Majesty?"

"Ah! I thought you knew all about it, Countess. You see, I assured the Emperor, that, if he would but put up with my troubled sleep and general ugliness, I would try to do the honors at his side before the Prince left. Although doubting the prospect, he staked three Vienna hats on a wager I offered; namely, that I would be out to-day. Poor husband! he lost, and after all he endured on my account!" And, with a little shudder, Her Majesty concluded: "If I had been Kaiser, ten horses could not have dragged me to a bedfellow such as I have been for the last three or four days."

That was an afterthought, you notice, but not the most disagreeable, by any means, growing out of that eventful visit. Both Emperor and Empress had fondly hoped that the Prince of Naples would fall in love with Feo, a belief that was doomed from the outset, the Prince never having lost sight of the fact that he needed a very handsome wife to treat his future subjects to a successor at all likely to silence allusions to the Darwinian theory.

A rough estimate, gathered from the Kaiser's printed calendars that are published for the benefit of court officials, body-servants, and newspapers, and minutely set forth how and where His Majesty spends his time, or is supposed to spend it, would seem to indicate that in the course of a year he is home about one hundred days,—that is, for one hundred days he lives with Her Majesty under the same roof; but this circumstance does not in any way indicate that their Majesties take their meals together, or even see each other daily, except in bed and at breakfast. I clip at random one of those daily programmes:

9.15 A.M. Report by the chief of the military cabinet.

10.30 A.M. Report by the Chancellor.

12.30 P.M. Audience to newly-appointed army officers. Luncheon on the train.

2 P.M. Departure for hunt at Count Finkenstein's. At midnight, return to the Neues Palais.

Or take another day:

9 A.M. Review of the —— Regiment on the Bornstedter Feld.

1.30 P.M. Luncheon in the mess-room.

6 P. M. Dinner with the officers of the *Garde du Corps*. Hour of return not stated.

The reader perceives an interval of several hours between luncheon and dinner, which might be devoted to wife and children; but it must not be forgotten that a person so continually on the move as the Emperor needs a corresponding amount of rest, repose, and freshening up, even though in the bright lexicon of William there may be no such word as knocking off. Unofficially, the Kaiser retires to his dressing-room after luncheon, goes to his little bachelor bed, sleeps an hour and a half, and then jumps into a hot bath, followed by an ablution of cold sea-water. That, of course, puts new vigor into him, and makes him

ready for the evening's campaign, but his family see him not in the interim.

Though William never pays the slightest attention to time-tables, a special train being good enough for him at any season, he is enough of a Potsdamer to return home at midnight when the Court is established in the Neues Palais. Naturally, nobody, who is anybody, is astir at that hour, but that does not prevent him from making as much noise as if it were noon: clatter of wheels and hoofs, horses driven at breakneck speed, sentinels shouting and striking their fire-arms on the pavement, seneschal, adjutants, porters, secretaries, footmen, and valets standing at attention, or flying hither and thither, and all candles and lamps in the passage-ways and rooms blazing forth. Perish the sleep of retainers when the lord is awake!

These midnight specials are bad enough; but when the fleet-footed four-in-hand is pressed into service for journeys to and from Berlin, Her Majesty's eyes grow red with weeping, and her maids wish themselves far away; for, as to home-coming, the quartet of Hungarian grays is even less reliable than the railway, while starting-hour and chance stops on the way are alike mysteries. Ah! to be German Empress is not all champagne and oysters, by any means.

But the worst of it is when the calendar reads: "His Majesty intends to spend the night at the Berlin Schloss." True, that big pile has no Palais Netherland connected with it by a covered archway as the palace Unter den Linden where William's grandfather dwelt,—in his salad days, the old man used this convenience for nocturnal poaching trips on strange preserves acclimated in the Netherland mansion; but the Schloss is so large, has so many entrances, and there are so many people living in it, that the arrival of a lady more or less would not evoke the

slightest comment among the sentinels and doorkeepers. What opportunities! what food for jealous reflection!

Whether William is away for a couple of days, or a week, or a month, he never writes to the Kaiserin, either directly or in answer to letters received from her. His adjutants, or other officers on duty, must attend to this as to every other item of correspondence, and such entertaining news as: "His Majesty arrived, or departed, safely; glorious reception;" or, "His Majesty shot so many hares, stuck a prodigious number of pigs, or killed so many deer or buck; weather such and such,"—signed, House-marshal von Lyncker, or Master of the Hounds,—often form the only link between the imperial minds for many weeks. Always of tantalizing uniformity, the scantiness of these messages is indeed strange, considering that they are sent toll-free.

But if the Empress has to be satisfied with meagre tidings of her lord, the Kaiser gets along on even less home intelligence. Though Her Majesty writes by every mail, it would never do to lose precious minutes that might be spent in amusement or sightseeing by opening his wife's letters, the more so when one is sure they contain only nothingnesses (for items of interest must be telegraphed); but, at the same time, ignorance of any of the petty information forwarded with such touching regularity might cause vexation and suspicion. So the Emperor diversifies the return trips from his jaunts by carefully studying all the missives received from Auguste Victoria day by day,—not an original method among husbands, I surmise.

A continuous source of amusement to His Majesty are the minute accounts of his daily labors in the vineyard of statecraft, and of almost any other vocation imaginable, published in books, magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers with a minuteness of detail and conceived in a know-all vein

of assurance, interlarded with "deepest" and "highest" admiration, that make them soul-stirring and pathetic.

These descriptions of what is indescribable (for the greater part of the labors ascribed to His Majesty are creations of the authors' fancies) commenced to pour in on us almost with the beginning of the present reign; but the Kaiser's speech to the municipal council of Berlin, on October 27, 1888, when he protested against the imputation that he travelled around for the fun of the thing, gave it its real momentum.

"I have placed my health and all my bodily resources in jeopardy to serve the cause of peace and to promote the Fatherland's prosperity by visiting allies and friends in all parts of the world," he cried; and German opinion, always ready to be corrected, at once changed its sing-song of the Kaiser-on-the-tramp into that of the Kaiser-at-work; and ever since have sycophants and mere imitators pronounced William a veritable *perpetuum mobile* of useful activity.

I do not propose to weary the reader by attempting a detailed account of the Kaiser's employments,—of when he deigns to get up and when he "graciously" retires; works at governing, and governs the work of others; listens to reports and asserts himself; fences, rides, drives, and what not. These are matters for the official chronicler to record, and the reader will find them nicely done up in parcels, bound with black, white, and red ribbons, in Mr. Bigelow's various accounts of the Kaiser's life as the Kaiser sees it,—that life which is but a "whirligig of hard labor for the good of the people and for the peace of Europe," or else an attempt to square accounts with the Supreme Creator. The Kaiser imagines he is going through one of these high-minded performances continuously, whether he draws plans for an impossible battle-ship, or

part of the civil list, whether he risks his bones in a Troika driven by a German, who knows no more about handling three Asiatic stallions[1] than I do about cutting diamonds, or reads a speech from the throne:—it is all fish in the net of imperial aggrandizement thrown out at random to entwine loyal minds at home and abroad,—people who think it an honor to be dazzled by princes, and "wink quite honestly at royal radiance."

The underlying idea of Bigelow's and kindred efforts is to keep up the myth of incessant service rendered to the crown, a martyrdom of work broken occasionally by a stroke of genius, such as writing a novel, painting a landscape, conceiving a series of allegorical pictures, composing music, or inventing this, that, or the other thing.

Mind, I do not deny that the Emperor performs these various tasks—after a fashion that will be explained in another place; but I gainsay the Herculean nature imputed to most of them, and, furthermore, distinctly reject the idea that they are undertaken to alleviate a mind staggering under the weight of responsibilities and burdened by excessive desk-work. We can well imagine Frederick II ordering a flute concert to be improvised after a day's bloody work in the field, or following a disgusting parley with his brother-counterfeiters.[2] Napoleon, flying from

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[1] The Russian coachman whom Czar Alexander sent along when he presented the Kaiser with the famous vehicle, in the summer of 1890, was dismissed because he had the hardihood to ask fifty dollars salary per month, and the native succeeding him promptly wrecked the Troika.

[2] During the Seven Years' War, Frederick II, assuming the royal privilege of raising revenue, resorted to the coinage of millions of Thalers of about half the value of the standard coin; these he imprinted with the effigies of the Prince of Bernburg and the King of Poland, and forced their circulation among the people of the subjugated districts.

victory to victory in Italy, needed nothing so much as his pleasant harlot of a Josephine; but these were men of consummate brain-power, men who, after tiring out twenty geniuses a day, needed but the tonic of sweet melodies, or an *heure du berger*, to be ready for another siege of labor.

William is not made of the clay of the philosopher of Sans Souci, nor of that of the lion of St. Helena, be he ever so clever a masquerader in the lion's skin. At school and at college the highest degree attained by him was "satisfactory;"—another pupil, being no more satisfactory, would probably have been called incompetent. His attempt at handling large masses of troops, in the presence of the Emperor of Austria and the King of Saxony, in Silesia, September, 1890, led to disaster, while Count Waldersee preferred to resign as chief of the General Staff rather than permit the Emperor to meddle with his department and "periodically" discharge batteries of well-meant ignorance at him, as the General told Bismarck during a visit to Friedrichsruhe shortly after assuming command of the Ninth Corps.

Graf Seckendorf furnishes an amusing skit on William's tale of woe about "risking health and life to save the Fatherland."

"Enduring fatigues, he calls it," says the Count; "to be bathed and groomed; breakfast; take a canter on a horse previously tired out, and so trained as to give the rider not the least trouble; breakfast again; ride to a parade, or, while stretching on a lounge, listen to reports carefully worded so that they may be agreeable to the imperial digestion; before luncheon, some pleasant conversation with officers from all parts of the country; meal diversified by clever men and women, drummed together for the purpose of disporting their wit and retailing the latest gossip; after luncheon, a cold rub-down and an hour's absolute rest in a

comfortable bed; dressed anew by smart servants; meal number four,—coffee and cakes,—a drive or lawn-tennis; a minister or a general makes his report; after dinner, theatre or reception; finally, meal number five; bed.

"Or, instead of so unexciting an afternoon, an impromptu hunting trip, a cruise on the Havel lakes, and, on extraordinary occasions, a state council, a visit to the Chancellor to air one's opinion, or to a rehearsal to catechise actors and actresses. Is that hard work?"

Not for the master who, mapping out a twelve, fourteen, or eighteen hours' programme, enjoys every minute of it while his servants drudge,—and they are all servants in William's eye, be they called Bismarck or Count Hahnke, Adolph Menzel, or Poultney Bigelow; "his" decorations, "his" uniforms, "his" fancy costumes, decreed for councillors, artists, friends of the chase, and aristocrats; "his" livery, and last, but not least, "his" very condescension, make them so; he rests when he feels disposed and as long as he wishes, even while his attendants report, standing an hour or so in heavy accoutrement; and that his strength may never fail him he partakes of five meals per day, while "servants" not admitted to the imperial table must be content, very frequently, to dine off the vapors from the dishes borne past them.

"My indefatigability," "my prowess," are perpetual themes with the Kaiser, and "You should have seen von Hülsen or von Kessel (both adjutants) puff and gasp after our half-hour's fencing, while I was as fresh as if I had just stepped from my bath," is one of his favorite boasts. He omits, however, to state, that, while wearing a linen jacket himself, these functionaries are encased in their stiff-collared, long-frocked uniforms, weighted down by silver tassels and braids, and with a heavy sabre at their side, laboring, moreover, under the difficulty of having to

court defeat, for it would not only be imprudent, but even dangerous, to forestall William's exultations. No wonder the gentlemen lose their breath.

As Caligula wished that the Roman people had but one neck that he might cut it off, so the Kaiser would like to see the entire military force of the Fatherland personified in one being, that he might practise on it as on a lay figure,—march, turn about face, take the ditch, prostrate yourself, stand on your head,—but, considering that the Reichstag has a voice in the matter of public expenditure, His Majesty must be content to keep but two adjutants continuously employed. These gentlemen, together with the members of the military household, including representatives of all arms and of the navy, rarely leave the Kaiser's presence. Their office adjoins His Majesty's study on one side, and is connected with the orderlies' room on the other, wherever the Court is established. In the Neues Palais it is situated on the ground-floor, facing the barracks of the Lehr battalion,—a not very spacious but dull room covered by a gray carpet and furnished with a number of red damask *fauteuils* placed in front of writing-desks.

In the orderlies' room three sorts of men are present at all times, day and night,—a *terzetto* of chasseurs, as many body gendarmes, and several infantry from the Lehr battalion. The first-named belong to the variety of *Jaegers* whom the Prussian Court employs in and out doors, on the box of the carriage, and at the chase. They rank a little above the flunky, being admitted to private rooms, and wait on their Majesties when other servants are excluded. However, their present employment is not half so confidential as it used to be. The *Kammerjaegers* of old were engaged to chase the disturbers of royal peace or pleasure, in the shape of fleas and crawling members of

the bug family, out of the rooms (*Kammern*), and also "from the persons of the king's and queen's majesty," as the chroniclers say, and, let us hope, from the persons of the princes and princesses too.

The body gendarmes are members of a battalion of picked men assigned to special duty upon the King. Neither in peace nor war do they enter into the general service of the army, and the Reichstag tries, year by year, to abolish these household troops on the plea that the officers and men are nothing short of armed flunkies.

The duties of all these persons are strictly defined. Visitors calling upon His Majesty's personal business are received by the chasseurs, and, if persons of distinction, are conducted into the adjutant's room; if purveyors, or messengers bringing packages, the Emperor's valets and wardrobemen on watch in a chamber above, that can be reached by a dark staircase, are notified.

The uniformed orderlies attend to military visitors, each gendarme having his horse ready in the near-by stables to gallop away with despatches at a moment's notice, while the infantrymen's bicycles stand in the court-yard near the windows that serve as doors. Thus the Emperor is enabled to put into execution on the spot any idea of a private or public nature that may suddenly strike him: he notifies one of his adjutants by a ring or call, the adjutant gives the order to the galloping mounted or wheeled, and the thing is done before anybody has time to consider its advisability or possibly troublesome exigencies, the telephone and the telegraph—the latter established in a near-by pavilion—aiding and abetting this mode of doing business.

An adjutant is on duty two days and two nights each week, and ranks with the high officials of the household. Horses and carriages are at his disposal, and he lives on the

fat of the land. The quarters of these gentlemen are in the south wing of the palace, near the historical apartments of Frederick the Great, and each has a single chamber, with a cabinet for his servant, but no toilet or bath room.

Nearer to the Kaiser than all these faithful servants are his two *Dachshunds*, called Teckels, biting, snarling little brutes with jaws measuring half the length of their smooth body, and a corresponding penchant for people's calves, skirts, and petticoats. Except to the bedroom, from which they are excluded out of respect for the Empress's legs, these pets follow His Majesty everywhere, and when they make inroads on folks' flesh and blood, or clothes, William, who protects and coddles them, thinks it huge fun.

Whether the cunning Teckels know their imperial patron's overpowering position, I cannot say; but it looks almost like it, for, in the exuberance of their mischievous spirits, even the little propriety pounded into them in their earliest youth is now neglected, and Court-marshal von Eulenburg, whose pleasant duty it is to make both ends meet in the royal *ménage*, has his hands full covering up the damage to furniture, decorations, and bric-a-brac in the Teckels' path, or to such articles as they are able to reach by high vaults and other caprioles that the Kaiser has taught them.

"Why don't you poison the beasts?" once said Eulenburg's colleague, pious Baron von Mirbach who is on the Empress's staff, when His Excellency had wearied him with a jeremiad about the *Dachshunds*' wickedness.

"I have thought of that myself, and would gladly go to this extremity, seeing that it meets with your most Christian approval, if I were sure that there would be no successors. But His Majesty might take it into his head to surround himself with Danish hounds, *à la* Bismarck, and then none of us would be safe."

A very funny incident in connection with the Teckels happened in the winter of 1893, at the Berlin Schloss, when a select company, in which ladies in grand toilet predominated, had assembled at 1.15 P.M., in the Pillar Room, to await their Majesties' coming, in order to form the usual procession to the dining-hall, where a ceremonious breakfast awaited us.

As is customary, Her Majesty's *Dames du jour*, Countess Keller and Fräulein von Gersdorff, stood a little ahead of the rest, facing the door through which Her Majesty was to enter, and, the august hosts being expected at any moment, everybody was on the alert.

Suddenly the portals opened,—bowings and scrapings, and most submissive salutations,—but, lo! only the *Dachshunds* rushed in.

"*Peste!*" said Herr von Egloffstein, who stood at my side; while Prince Frederick Leopold, coming in just then, remarked: "I would give anything to have on jack-boots and spurs! Wouldn't I whisk them off, or at least one of the litter, through the window!"

The Teckels, on their part, had no sooner caught sight of the silk stockings of the courtiers, than they began to bark menacingly, causing these worthies, who ten seconds before had paraded their calves with much gusto, to withdraw behind the ladies they were to escort. But these precautionary measures were seemingly superfluous, as the Kaiser's pets showed no particular desire for a bite that afternoon. Instead, each separately squatted down before Mesdames von Keller and von Gersdorff, and conducted himself in the most filthy fashion, more basely, indeed, than a self-respecting puppy would do in the kitchen. Perfidious Teckels! all the floggings and nose-rubbings the fancier had applied for that very thing were forgotten, and, worst of all, the Kaiser, Her Majesty upon his arm,

and, like her, *en grande tenue*, entered at that very moment; so withdrawal on the part of Keller and Gersdorff was out of the question. On the contrary, the unhappy ladies were obliged to bow low, bending from the waist at an angle of forty-five degrees, while the Teckels, much relieved, clambered up His Majesty's hussar boots, wagging their funny tails.

"Oh! you bad boys!" cried the Kaiser, having taken in the situation at a glance; "if you do that again, I will have you birched,—yes, indeed I will," he added, seeing ironic smiles all around. Then he had a fit of laughter that made him hold his sides, and which resounded through the hall. He even sought to inveigle the Empress into joining in his merriment; but Her Majesty ignored him, and, blushing deeply, drew her consort out of the room.

The Teckels remained in the Pillar Hall while we breakfasted, and amused themselves by tearing into little pieces a beautiful fan which Countess Pückler, *née* Countess von der Schulenburg, who was one of the Empress's dames before her marriage, had left behind.

The Duchess L——

CHAPTER III

Only during the absence of their Majesties are visitors admitted to the Neues Palais,—a rule from which there is absolutely no appeal. Even William K. Vanderbilt, whom the Emperor personally regards as the very richest man in the world,—the Kaiser has not a great head for figures, as already shown,—even Vanderbilt, I say, was on one occasion turned away from our gate like a beggar, or some Hungry Joe of the road. It happened in October, 1891, and made quite a stir in the palace.

Vanderbilt, it appears, had driven to the castle over the royal highway, and his coach was about to enter one of the outer gates, when the sentinel stationed there, observing the lack of a known and so-called "courtly" livery on the part of the Jehu and footman, stopped the horses and demanded a card of admission.

"This is His Majesty's friend," said Jacques Hartog, Mr. Vanderbilt's courier, with an air of magnificent assurance, but the soldier only stared the harder.

"Your pass, Herr!" repeated the infantryman.

"You don't understand things. This is Mr. Vanderbilt, the American millionaire!" Hartog was pleading now.

As the word "American" struck the sentinel's long ears, he raised his gun, for his lieutenant had taught him that the United States is "one of those confounded republics," totally devoid of a king, or princes, or even a respectable standing army.

"*Kutscher*," he commanded, in his most pompous voice, and apparently unmindful of Hartog's very existence,—"*Kutscher*, right about face, forward march! March, I say, and march, a third time, or I will shoot!"

The guardsman kept his gun levelled on the intruders until the coach containing the lord of twice as many good, round dollars as the Emperor has subjects vanished behind a cloud of fine white dust, and God knows what would have happened if Hartog, who has a well-established reputation for pugnaciousness and obstinacy, had endeavored to run the blockade in order to please his rich patron; for these sentinels carry sharp cartridges, and if they shoot—and they often do so on windy provocation—they fire to kill.

I cannot remember now whether the public honoring by the Emperor of a sentinel, who, while on duty, shot down some poor wretch, happened previously to Mr. Vanderbilt's unsuccessful attempt to visit the royal domain, or not. In that case, His Majesty called the offender to the front, shook him by the hand, and assured him of his royal grace, saying: "I am proud to commend you as an obedient and courageous soldier; such devotion as yours will always meet with my highest approval," or words to that effect. But I do know that the *rencontre* was earnestly discussed in the imperial family and the castle about a month later, after the Emperor had delivered his famous speech at the swearing-in of the Potsdam recruits. There are two versions of that address. The one which the majority of newspapers printed at the time, reads: "Children of my guard, you are now my soldiers,—mine, body and soul! You have sworn to obey all my commands; you must follow my rules and my advice without grumbling. It means that, from this day on, you durst know but one enemy, and that enemy is my enemy. And if I command you some day,—and

may God grant that I am never driven to this extremity,—if I command you, I repeat, to fire upon your own relatives, your sisters and parents perhaps, remember your oath!"

That version is terrible enough; but, compared with the original draft of the speech, which I happen to have seen on the Kaiser's *secrétaire*, the words actually said may be almost characterized as tame.

There it was, in William's tall, forcibly-rounded hand:

"Recruits! Remember that the German army must be as ready to fight enemies that may rise in our midst, as foreign foes. To-day, disbelief and malcontentedness are rampant in the Fatherland to a heretofore unheard-of degree; consequently, I may call upon you at any time to shoot down and strike to the ground (*niederstechen*) your own relatives,—father and mother, sisters and brothers. My orders in that respect must be executed cheerfully and without grumbling, like any other command I may issue. You must do your duty, no matter what your hearts' dictates are. And now go home and attend to your new duties."

I came upon this document quite accidentally, the Empress having ordered me to fetch from the desk in the Kaiser's study the calendar whereon His Majesty's engagements in and out of town are registered,—if I am not mistaken, my august mistress desired to know the date of the Torgau jubilee (November 25),—and the precious composition was written on blank spaces between the dates I had to examine. "Monstrous!" I thought, reading over for the second time what William had the folly to indite and not wit enough to keep to himself; my heart trembled with anxiety for both country and Emperor. And to think that he memorized this murderous self-apotheosis within earshot of his wife, and with his innocent babies

sleeping above! And I—involuntary keeper of a state secret!

It troubled me a good deal during the night, but next morning's news quickly took the load off my shoulders, for Her Majesty remarked that the Kaiser was much pleased with the impression his speech had produced,—that of striking terror into the hearts of Socialists and others opposed to the imperial will.

"But does not Your Majesty fear misinterpretation on the part of the overzealous?" I asked; "the papers are filled with reports about brutalities in the army, and about the overbearing conduct of the military at all times. At the unveiling of the Schloss Fountain in Berlin, I even heard a rumor that Vanderbilt came near being shot while driving toward the Neues Palais."

That was a lighted match into a powder-barrel! Her Majesty caused inquiries to be made at once, and meanwhile got all her ladies together to discuss the exigencies of the case. Of course, in their opinion, it would not matter much if an ordinary mortal is killed by a sentinel; but the richest man in the world!—that was another thing. Would, in such a contingency, the United States declare war against Germany?

The Countesses Bassewitz and Brockdorff wished it would, for they have relatives in the navy; but when I suggested that the Yankees might prefer to take it out of German commerce, Her Majesty became thoughtful.

"I have heard the Kaiser remark that Vanderbilt could cripple the finances of the entire universe," she said; "if that sentinel had shot him, his brothers and heirs might drive our good Miquel to suicide."

While we were talking, *Kammerdiener* Nolte arrived with the information of the Vanderbilt incident mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, and additional news that

Court-marshal von Mirbach, had especially advised the millionaire that it was impossible to view the palace at the time, owing to the presence of the Empress.

Revenons à nos moutons after this excursion into the realms of state secrets and troubled finance. The Neues Palais, I tried to explain, is but rarely open to the public, and those fifty-eight rooms, of a total of two hundred, inhabited by their Majesties, are, as a matter of course, closed against intruders at all times. If, however, the ordinary run of visitors were permitted to view the private apartments of the imperial couple, they would quickly come to the conclusion that, like a good *paterfamilias*, the Kaiser allows his wife to keep for herself all bibelots and curios, magnificent Boules and quaint rococos, which past generations of royal Hohenzollerns have hoarded up, and likewise the most beautiful pieces of furniture and treasures of art newly acquired with the first William's amassed fortune.

The Kaiser's up-stairs study is a large, lofty room, and, being the rostrum from which the Empire and the whole world in general are addressed (who knows not the date line: "Given at the Neues Palais"?), I may be pardoned for describing it in detail. The walls of this historic chamber are hung with light-green damask, faded to such an extent as to make the stuff look shabby in spots, and the furniture is upholstered in the same material. Tulle curtains, through the open-work of which green ribbons run, frame the windows, two in number, while the silk overcurtains are drawn back for the greater part of the time. Near the door leading into the reception-room rises one of those immense black marble mantels that we encounter everywhere in the castle,—a fact furthering the suspicion that the builder, economically-inclined Frederick II, ordered them by the gross at a discount. There is a small bronze clock on the mantel between two candelabra, just as if this

was the parlor of Herr Rechtsanwalt Schmidt, or Frau Schlächtermeister Schultze, and near the fire-place is the Emperor's writing-table, a big, clumsy walnut affair with machine-turned feet, and trimmings such as may be found in any well-regulated household in Germany. The Berliner calls this *monstrum* of stilted inelegancy "Diplomat's Desk," for what special reason I do not know. When the Kaiser sits at his *secrétaire*, he has his back toward the windows, while to the right of him mighty folding-doors lead into a dressing-room, which latter connects with their Majesties' joint sleeping apartment.

The hangings of the lower wall opposite the mantel are hidden behind two immense Boule chests of drawers with gray marble tops, specimens of the original Charles Boule's handiwork, according to the register in the Court-marshal's office. They have a veneer of tortoise-shell backed by gold bronze, and the wood is as hard as iron. One of these chests the Kaiser turned into a sort of pigeon-hole for his official correspondence.

The tops of these beautifully-modelled antiques, as well as that of the ugly Berlin-made desk, are literally covered with marine views, charcoal sketches, and photographs of beautiful women, framed and unframed. As is well known, both their Majesties have a passion for photography, which William was wont to call "a royal art" until he heard that the late Duke of Marlborough, "who married a daughter of the republic for her money," practised it; but while Her Majesty collects photographs indiscriminately, the Kaiser shows a decided partiality for those of charming women. True, he honors men in the service of the Court or government, or of social renown, quite frequently by requests for pictures; but on receiving them he invariably shuts them away where the flies cannot get at them, while portraits of handsome princesses and other fair ones who

made an impression upon the imperial mind are everywhere in William's rooms,—figures large and small, in all sorts of costumes, or even distinguished by an absence of such; plain pictures, silver prints, in colors or painted over; personal gifts, inscribed with sweet sentiments, or the output of art stores.

Among the likenesses regularly found on the Emperor's writing-table, no matter whether he is at home or in his private car, or visiting with relatives and friends, is one of the Duchess of Aosta, *née* Letitia Bonaparte, remarkable for the fact that Her Imperial Highness's overflowing bust is uncovered except for a *collier* of pear-shaped pearls. For this portrait the Kaiser professes a special liking, because, he says, it reminds him of a certain masterpiece representing Letitia's great-grandaunt, the Empress Josephine. "Don't you think it does?" he once, after a lengthy dissertation on the point, asked his wife, who cordially detests her cousin of Aosta.

"Maybe," answered Her Majesty; "but Josephine might have exposed herself with impunity, for, I understand, she had breasts of wax."

Another picture of the Duchess, usually found on the Emperor's desk, is on more conventional lines, but, like the first, it exhibits Letitia's magnificent arms and fine hands to perfection. The significance of this will be shown in another chapter, where the Kaiser's relations to the fair sex are discussed.

Other picture favorites of His Majesty are the Grand Duchess Vladimir, Lady Dudley, that "little Marie of Edinburgh," whom William admires so much on account of her motherly labors in the interest of a Roumanian dynasty; the Princess of Wales in Court dress, her finely-chiselled shoulders laden with jewels; and Fräulein von Böcklin, daughter of the Prussian General.

This young lady figures occasionally in living pictures, arranged by members of the Court society for charity purposes, and, with her rich Titian hair, big blue eyes, and chaste figure, is, perhaps, the most beautiful German girl of the period. The Kaiser likes her best in antique Greek costume, and Fräulein von Böcklin is under orders to send to His Majesty a specimen copy of every photograph she has taken.

I have almost forgotten to include in the above list the beautiful Countess Goertz, of whom more anon.

In front of a sofa with metal feet and frame stands a *marqueterie* table of many-colored woods inlaid, and of very unique Holland design, which, needless to say, is an inheritance from the great Frederick, who seems to have been the only Prussian King endowed with a sense of the truly beautiful.

To complete the inventory of the room, which is far from luxurious, or even cosy, it is but necessary to mention three or four *fauteuils*, a big pier-glass with a marble console between the windows, a crystal chandelier hanging from the gilded ceiling, and a lounge with a profusion of loose cushions. The lounge, by the way, is worthy of kings "that have no use for dressing-gowns," as the Court-marshal of William I once wrote to an enterprising tailor who had presented His late Majesty with an elaborate morning-wrapper. It is far too narrow and short to accommodate even so small a man as the Kaiser, and recalls the benches in the Sans Souci picture-gallery, which were built with the idea of producing the greatest possible amount of discomfort, so that the King's pages occupying them might not fall asleep.

A richly-gilded folding-door connects the study with a reception-room, which latter is chiefly notable for the air of inoccupancy pervading every nook and corner of the great barn-like apartment. As a matter of fact, the Kaiser

uses it merely for a passage-way to the adjoining Marble Hall, where presents and newly-bought stuffs for decoration, pictures or furniture, are placed on exhibition until their Majesties decide where they shall go, while visitors and friends are usually received in the lecture-room on the ground-floor, so called because there ministers of state and others deliver verbal reports, or take orders on current business, and listen to His Majesty's sublime conceptions of things.

The upper room is sparsely furnished with arm-chairs and sofas, perhaps a hundred years old, but none the more valuable on that account; for neither the multicolored pattern of the damask covering nor the carved frames exhibit refined taste or originality. As in most rooms of the castle, the wall and window hangings are of the color of the furniture, and the chandelier and mantel like those in the study.

How well I remember this now neglected room when not so many years ago, during the life-time of the then Crown Prince, I was a guest at the palace. That happy royal couple, Frederick William and Victoria, used it as an antechamber to the Marble Hall, and in those days the walls were draped with the grand tapestries that Napoleon had presented to the Crown Princess. That before her withdrawal from the castle Empress Frederick removed the gobelins and shipped them to her palace Unter den Linden, is but one of the many reasons why the son does not like his thrifty mother. Indeed, history repeats itself constantly in the highest as well as the lowest strata of society. The Smith and Brown families are "all torn up," because, at the apportioning of the estates, Aunt Sarah or Cousin John grabbed an old clock or silver teapot which Uncle Charles had coveted. The young Kaiser admires tapestry, if he need not buy it himself, and thought his mother

might leave the French Emperor's gift where it showed to great advantage. Very naturally, Victoria held a different view, and, presto! animosities scarce buried raised their heads again. If Her Majesty had not been so quick about it, William might have enforced against his own mother the law providing that articles of decoration attached to the walls cannot be taken away by tenants.

We now retrace our steps to the study, and from there enter the Kaiser's dressing-room, treading all the while on the thickest and heaviest of carpets, irrespective of the season of the year, for the Kaiser detests the proverbially slippery parquet of the Court, though, according to a saying in vogue in Berlin, such a state of mind bespeaks an inherent inability to maintain one's equilibrium in most things. William, you must know, is never quite sure of his legs, the left one, as stated, being liable to give way at any time when His Majesty's mind is not concentrated upon posing physically as well as mentally. There are, besides, even with a character so continuously on the alert as William II, hours in the day when he likes to unbend and throw off that dignity of demeanor for which his public and semi-public appearance is noted; when he becomes a plain aristocrat like the one whom he takes for pattern in all things, who became plain "Fritz" or "Pantagruel" after midnight, when the friends of his Muse were expected to help the conqueror-king to forget the weight of greatness for a couple of hours.

Though personally I could no more imagine the Kaiser associating with a lot of cynics and mountebanks, such as Frederick kept to while away hours of leisure, than I would expect him to attend a state ceremony in undress, or with his mustachios drooping, I can assure you, that, in the seclusion of his chamber, he is a very different man from the one that even the members of his titled household know.

That he ordered his own living rooms carpeted throughout is against all tradition at the Berlin Court; but as nobody, who is anybody, invades his sanctum, why should he trouble? The small soirees, musicales, and receptions are invariably held in the Empress's apartments, or the semi-state-rooms of the parterre floor. On these occasions the Kaiser considers himself the chief guest; he is the cynosure of all eyes, the pole-star that social and political navigators must forever consult to avoid wreck; there the drill-ground echo: "Attention!" perpetually dins in his ears: "Attention to your arm," "Attention, Your Majesty, your leg is giving way."

The strain must be awful; and I am sure, when the Kaiser in his speeches continuously refers to the labors of his position, he thinks of this martyrdom inflicted by his physical shortcomings, rather than of the many hundred miles he puts between himself and respectable *ennui* at his fireside, though wishing the public at all times to think he is fairly killing himself so that "every peasant in the kingdom shall have a fowl in his pot on Sundays."

A fully-carpeted floor is a guarantee against sudden tumbles, in one respect at least, and if one *has* to fall, a heavy velvet pile seems much preferable to a hardwood veneer, be it ever so highly polished.

The Kaiser's dressing-room is situated directly above Emperor Frederick's death-chamber, which latter now serves as a sort of corridor, from necessity rather than irreverence, I should add, for, when the Neues Palais was built, passage-ways leading to its great chambers were forgotten for the most part, as King Frederick quarrelled with the architect and finished the castle according to his own unprofessional notions. The hangings, furniture-coverings, and carpets are like those of the study, green or red respectively, and here, too, the damask is much the worse for wear in many places.

As the windows of the chamber overlook the barracks of the Lehr und Wehr Battalion, His Majesty, by simply putting his head out of the window, could alarm the garrison at any hour of the night or day; but, strange to say, this fancy never struck him, though he often travels half the night to chase some poor regiment in a wayside town or fortress out of Morpheus's and God knows whose arms at unearthly hours.

In a small alcove opposite the windows stands a single brass bedstead with spring and horse-hair mattresses, whose English arrangement of sheets, blankets, and chamois cushions gives the servants perpetual cause for grumblings. To the left of the alcove is the door leading into their Majesties' joint bedroom, while on the other side a large closet, built in the wall, contains the Kaiser's body-linen, not much of it. All the historical half-dozen shirts a Prussian monarch or prince is entitled to are there, but, *horribile dictu*, the article is innocent of cuffs, a commodity William attaches with the aid of buttons and pulleys, like any poor lieutenant, who looks upon men sporting an English-made dress-shirt as veritable plungers. Of socks, never above a dozen pairs are in use, half-yellow, half-brown, and, like the underwear, of lisle; but the Hozenzollern house laws evidently impose no restriction as to handkerchiefs, which seem to come grosswise, all, like the shirts, drawers, and socks, inscribed with "W" and the royal crown.

While the modern articles of furniture heretofore mentioned are of the most ordinary description,—store-goods, and not the most expensive, either,—His Majesty's washstand is of truly royal dimensions and elaborateness, occupying the best part of the rear wall at the side of the mantel. It is made of lightwood, with an imposing marble top, and ditto shelves, decorated with handsome

crystals and silver things, carafes, brushes, jugs, etc. Was ever King of Prussia, or a Holy Roman Emperor of German nationality, so well fixed in respect to toilet requisites? And would William be that wonder of neatness to all the people in his employ, if it were not for his English mother? Such questions are constantly agitated in the palace among the servants as well as the officials, for the laundresses, and especially the maids who attend to the royal chamber, carrying up three flights of stairs the oceans of hot and cold water His Majesty requires continuously during the day till late at night, regard William's passion for cleanliness as little short of crime, and the Court-marshal has his hands full pacifying the overworked and discharging the sulky, particularly those dragging the Empress Frederick's name into the discussion.

"I should think myself in heaven," said my mistress some time ago after reading a magazine article to the effect that even the bedrooms of moderately-priced American apartment houses are provided with running water, hot and cold,—"I should think myself in heaven if such were arranged for my husband's and my use, not to mention the children's, and I am the Kaiserin,"—a Kaiserin, she might have added, whose revenues are sequestrated to ostentation. Still, we must not be thought to be unprogressive at the Prussian Court. Compare Voltaire's wash-bowl in the Monkey and Parrot Room of Sans Souci with the corresponding commodity on the Kaiser's table: a finger-bowl to an English sitz-bath, and yet scarce one hundred and forty-five years have passed since the French poet's arrest in Frankfurt.

There are basketfuls of sponges, and skin-brushes by the score, on the marble shelves, but not a sign of toilet waters or colognes, ——'s soap serving all needed purposes for the bath as well as occasional ablutions and shaving.

And, with the persistency that is William's chief characteristic, he not only uses the article himself, but insists on its presence on the toilet-stand of every member of his household, being like his royal brother of Spain, Philip II, disposed to dictate the minor affairs of his people as well as direct the graver ones of the Empire. The latter laid awake nights devising new fashions in men's frills and women's petticoats; our erratic contemporary, forgetting the oft-quoted mandate of a great ancestor,—that in Prussia people shall go to heaven in their own way,—wants everybody to approach godliness after the fashion adopted by himself.

There have been frequent rubs at Court about that very thing (invalids of the cuticle object to be reminded of the doctor on all occasions; and who would blame them?); but all parties agree that in this particular instance "despotism does not tread upon the worm with haughty playfulness," and without substantial reason at the same time, for the Kaiser, you must know, credits his clear complexion and the possession of a remarkable white and smooth skin to the fact that he has used soap of a particular brand since earliest childhood. And, considering the several constitutional ailments he is subject to, this simple means has indeed done wonders, for, though William is usually pale, his skin is ever clear and wholesome, like that of an eminently healthy person.

To the luxurious toilet His Majesty's bath furnishes a formidable contrast, being an ordinary zinc tub, painted. But the most astonishing thing about it is its peculiar situation. Let those who consider themselves Fortune's graceless children because their neighbor's house or carriage or wife or diamonds are their neighbor's, take courage in the thought that Germany's Kaiser, twice a King, as many times a Grand Duke, eighteen times a Duke, three times a

Margrave, once a Burgrave,—whatever that means nowadays,—twice a Prince, nine times a Count, and fifteen times a Seigneur, besides being a Bishop, bathes behind a curtain in a stuffy corridor, the connecting-link between his dressing-gown and the conjugal bed-chamber. That this statement almost challenges belief, I am not the last to appreciate, but can only reiterate its truth. And, when you come to think it over, is it more startling than the story relating to King Leopold's bath in the Potsdam Stadt Schloss?

Court-marshal Liebenau was all in a flutter when, in August, 1890, His Belgian Majesty came to return the Kaiser's visit to Ostend, for his colleague of Brussels had informed him that the sovereign gentleman was addicted to the daily bathing habit, and demanded a hot bath at that. There was, at that time, only one royal palace available in town (the Kaiserin objected to entertaining Leopold at her own house), and this, the Stadt Schloss, contained but a single bath-room, which, to further complicate matters, is attached to the bridal suite where Prussian princesses pass their first night of matrimonial bliss. To lodge the old debauchee in that sacred apartment, which only once before had been defiled by a man who was not a groom at the time of occupancy, by Napoleon I, was out of the question, and if a cabinet was fitted up with the regulation German bath-tub and stove, the King would certainly poke fun at the antediluvian arrangement.

What, then, could be done?

At last Liebenau hit upon a plan. He set up a modern enough bath that was fed by a cold-water faucet, and placed under one end of it a row of gas-jets intended to heat the water in the tub. Should His Majesty find the bath too warm, calculated the official, with true native acumen, he can moderate the heat by turning on the cold reservoir.

Now, Leopold had enjoyed the previous night's festivities very much, and observing, in the morning, that his slightest wishes in regard to bodily comfort had been anticipated, he rose in right good humor. Stepping buoyantly into his bath at the cool end, and turning round, he sat himself down at the other, which, the gas having just been turned off, was nothing short of a furnace with the red-hot coals removed.

At the same moment an unearthly yell rent the castle from Marble Hall to scullery; the sentinels, marching up and down before the great gate, called out the guard, and dozens of officials and servants ran to the King's suite of apartments, thinking that His Majesty had been attacked. At last, the cries not ceasing, Herr von Liebenau, together with the housekeeper and the King's adjutant, took courage and burst into the bath-room, where they found His Majesty dancing an impromptu Highland fling, and war-whooping alternately in French and German for liniments and cold-cream. What he said to the Court-marshal became known only after the latter's dismissal and disgrace, for the servants who heard His Belgian Majesty read him the index of Brehm's "Animal World" never dared repeat the all-highest's observations during Liebenau's official life.

As a further consequence of the incident, it might be recorded that King Leopold did not ride to the parade held in his honor that morning, but viewed the ceremonies from his window.

If business or pleasure prevents the Kaiser from taking his dip in the morning, he either bathes in the afternoon, or before or after supper; the stove must be lit at all times, day and night, and a tablet of soap is consumed on each of these occasions. After stepping out, the Kaiser applies to his body several gallons of cold water, in which sea-salt has been dissolved, baling it rather laboriously from a vessel near at hand.

Besides a barber's chair, several *fauteuils*, and the furnishings already described, the dressing-room contains little worth mentioning, except a rare photograph representing Her Majesty in a travelling-wrap; this was taken in Venice in 1890, after the imperial couple's return from the Orient, and has never been published; but although it does not flatter the Kaiserin, none of her good-looking pictures are visible, while, on the other hand, all tables, consoles, and chests of drawers bear witness to the Kaiser's vain passion for seeing himself pictured, all being literally covered with photos showing His Majesty in every variety of costume,—at the manœuvres, on the parade-field, hunting, sailing, or making his entry into some town or village amid the loyal shouts of the populace.

A prince like the Kaiser, who owns a set of uniforms for each of the three hundred and odd Prussian regiments, horse, foot, and artillery, besides the ones appurtenant to the Bavarian, Würtemburg, and Saxony contingents, not to mention the Austrian, English, Russian, Roumanian, Spanish, Turkish, and Swedish armies that enrolled his name as colonel, general, or field-marshal,—the proprietor of such an official wardrobe needs, of course, most extensive store-rooms for his multicolored, tasselled, and gold-laced treasures, and that they are magnificently cared for goes without saying.

Space forbids minute description of the interesting collection, which, moreover, can never be complete, as the European military Minotaur, feeding on seven millions of men annually,—the original in the Cretan labyrinth was satisfied with seven youths and an equal number of virgins,—keeps on expanding; in other words, as new types of uniforms and arms are constantly invented and added.

And when I say that the Emperor owns uniforms of all Prussian and almost an equal number of foreign regiments,

not forgetting, by the way, that he is lord of the sea in Germany, Great Britain, Russia, and Sweden,—dignities that carry with them cocked hats, broadswords and daggers, blue cloth, and silver and gold lace galore,—I do not refer to the garments alone, but include all the ornaments, badges, sashes, side-arms, caps, helmets, czakos, busbies, czapkas, burganets, sabres, cuirasses, shoulder-points, knots and epaulettes, silver cords, belts, cartridge-cases, laces, etc., belonging to gala, full, and semi accoutrements.

All these innumerable and expensive accessories—a single pair of shoulder-knots often costs more than the uniform itself—must be on hand and ready for use at any given time, as bright and as good as new. Do you begin to understand why the Emperor is forever unable to make both ends meet with an income of sixteen million marks per year? How times have changed with these Prussian kings!

The great Frederick's entire wardrobe was "sold to a Jew for three hundred Thalers," and among the lot were the identical coat, breeches, and boots he wore at Rossbach. When, to come down to our own period, the late William I desired to be photographed in the uniform of the *Garde du Corps*, one of his officers had to lend him a cuirass, His Majesty refusing to go to the expense of buying one. And these monarchs won more battles than the present Kaiser earned, or even offered, racing-cups.

As Lafayette raised a frigate and crew at his own expense to assist the young American republic, so could William equip the marines of a first-class battle-ship, or the officers of ten army corps, from his wardrobe without being reduced to nakedness. He owns, besides those alluded to, scores of costumes adapted to various sports, numberless uniforms of yacht clubs in Germany and England, and last, but not least, an astounding array of plain clothes, with accompaniments of hats, gloves, ties, canes, shoes,

buttons, and scarfpins, which for each suit are especially selected, forming part of the garment, as it were; but this overabundance of things is far from embarrassing the young megalomaniac, who, quite to the contrary, enriched the *olla-podrida* of this rainbow hecatomb of organized vanity, tinselled in spots and real in others, where the lion's skin edges the fox's and the hare's, by a new and original effort, called "hunt uniform," hideous in cut and color, and which is occasionally bestowed by royal warrant upon some much-envied nobleman as a mark of special favor.

To sum up, I will mention that the Emperor's foreign uniforms alone occupied, in 1895, two immense rooms; perhaps an approximate idea of the extent of the clothes in stock can be gathered therefrom. In the Neues Palais, only regimentals in constant demand are kept, and these fill an imposing hall, separated from the dressing-room by folding-doors.

A *Kammerdiener* is in constant attendance there from early morning till night, so that the Kaiser is able to change his uniforms with the same celerity as his mind.

CHAPTER IV

One day, in the winter of 1892, when the Court was established in Berlin, I undertook to present to Her Majesty "the all-submissive" compliments of the Countess Brockdorff, asking leave to be excused from second breakfast.

"Tell Her Excellency that she has my permission, and with pleasure, and that nothing would suit me better than to have her and the whole lot of them stay away from my table all the year round," said Auguste Victoria, with a haughty shrug of the shoulders.

Being one of the "lot," I was surprised and vexed at this outburst. "If that remark was intended seriously, I beg to offer my resignation," I said, "and I am sure the Countess and other associates and all functionaries will follow suit, seeing that, for some unknown reason, we have had the misfortune to incur your Imperial Majesty's displeasure."

"No, no!" cried the Kaiserin; "I am very fond of you, and there is not one in the suite whom I dislike; but, Countess, can you not see that a woman, even though she be an Empress, wants her husband to herself once in a while?

"I have begged His Majesty a thousand times to take at least one meal besides breakfast alone with me and the children; I reminded him of the happy family life in his own father's house, where, except when guests were present, the Crown Prince and Princess and all the children

occupied one table, while the suite sat at another. So both master and retinue enjoyed perfect freedom at this pleasantest of rendezvous; but the Kaiser will not hear of it. To compare his Court with that of his parents is as ridiculous as to liken the establishment of some petty contemporary prince to that of Louis XIV, he says."

"According to the Duchess of Orleans, Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, the Grand Monarque would have no one at his table but members of the royal family," I observed.

The Empress rose excitedly. "Is that authentic?" she cried.

"Your Majesty will find it in the Duchess's memoirs, and no doubt, also, in some of her letters to the first Queen of Prussia, kept in our archives."

"I am under great obligations to you for these advices," said Her Majesty, holding out her hand, which I kissed; "my good Knesebeck shall look the matter up to-day—at once. Do not fail to send for him, I beg of you, when going out. But," continued the royal lady, and the expression of her face fell, "will the Kaiser care one way or another? You know he thinks it due to his position to maintain a certain state at all times; and so our meals—the few we have together—are made semi-public functions by the presence of officials and strangers, while my poor children are perpetually kept up-stairs and hardly see their father."

Her Majesty's complaint is only too well founded. With the exception of first breakfast, all meals in the palace are presided over by the marshal *du jour*, either Baron von Lyncker or Herr von Egloffstein, while two imperial adjutants, Grand-mistress von Brockdorff, two dames of the Court, and one of the Kaiser's and the Kaiserin's chamberlains are bound to attend. Besides, all members of their Majesties' titled entourage have the *entrée* to the

royal board, and are expected to avail themselves of this prerogative as often as possible, whether on duty or not.

That, under the circumstances, the sociable features are lost sight of and the stately character of the affair becomes emphasized, is self-evident, the more so as there are always guests, their number varying between two and fourteen, or even twenty, on ordinary days.

The house regulations provide that a list of invited persons be presented to the Empress and her ladies early every morning, so that they can dress accordingly; but my experience shows that it will never do to wear anything but one's second-best bib and tucker at table, whether the bulletin announces a brace of nobodies or half a dozen ministers and ambassadors, for, at the last moment, His Majesty may bring in the Chancellor, some sovereign or prince travelling *incognito*, or a whole host of fine-looking young officers whom he may have come across on one of his rides or outings, or who happen to report at the palace about meal-time. His habit of issuing these invitations, however, does not necessarily imply that William is a hospitable man; maybe he does not care a snap of his fingers for the individuals dragged to the gilded chair of *ennui* by "all-highest command;" he invites these gentlemen merely because they promise diversion, either by reason of their personality, or by information or gossip in their possession,—and anything to escape the monotony of our daily surroundings, is the Kaiser's continuous prayer.

If his wife and her ladies are embarrassed, so much the worse for them. As to the cuisine, it is its business to be prepared for emergencies. But one must study the face of the Court-marshal, when five or ten minutes before dinner or supper time half a dozen, or twice as many, extra covers have to be laid, to appreciate the amount of labor that these imperial surprise parties call for.

It is not a mere matter of lengthening or broadening a table, and increasing the quantity of plate, crystal, and silver, but frequently the entire order of the seats must be changed, each guest, save one, being entitled to triumph over the other by reason of his patent of nobility, his rank in the army, or on account of the orders and decorations he may possess. Think of the work involved, of the danger the Major-domo is running! I can assure the reader that no official of Emperor William's Court "would die of *ennui* if unable to fill up his or her time with ceremonies," Goethe notwithstanding. Our Court-marshals, above all, must have memories of unusual capacity, patience enough to stock a hospital, and some common-sense besides, and even then mistakes are sometimes made.

There was Count Perponcher, old Emperor William's perennial grand-master, for instance. Of the two first-named qualifications this dignitary was possessed to a marked degree; only in the latter virtue did he prove deficient on one historical occasion, when, during Czar Alexander's visit to Berlin, in 1888, he seated Bismarck at a state banquet among the scions of the lower nobility, giving precedence to a lot of nonentities because their names figure in the second part of the Almanach de Gotha, while the Chancellor's is in the third.

His Grace did not say a word in protest at the time, but when, a year or so later (in August, 1889), Emperor Francis Joseph returned the newly-made Kaiser's visit, he took his revenge. Not only was Count Eulenburg, Perponcher's successor, politely ordered to place the Prince where he belonged, opposite the two Emperors, but to further emphasize his position at Court and in the state, Bismarck chose to come two minutes after their Majesties and all the august company had been busy with their soup.

Eulenburg and the rest of the goldsticks were pale with terror and indignation, but Bismarck cut short their timid remonstrances with a haughty: "*Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi;*" in polite English: Calm yourself, no ordinary mortal will dare imitate Jupiter's audacious step.

These repasts at the Berlin Court, whether of the noon, evening, or night order, are, as intimated, the very reverse of convivial, and are not very elaborate as to menu, either, for listless weariness hangs over the majestic board like a black pall, checking every individual effort. The women sit as if encased in the tightest of corsets up to their throats, the men—

> "—— a wooden, pedantic race,
> In every motion displaying
> The same right angle, and in the face
> A frigid conceit betraying.
> They sit about stiffly, as though upon stilts,
> Stuck up as straight as a needle,
> Appearing as if they had swallowed the stick
> Once used as the best means to wheedle.
> Yes, ne'er has entirely vanished the rod;
> They carry it now inside them."—HEINE.

But this starchy demeanor is not confined to the retinue and guests; Emperor and Empress, sitting opposite each other, are as ceremonious and formal as any of the rest of the company who hang upon the all-highest eyes and lips with such assiduity as to preclude enjoyment of the things set before them.

"Three weeks' table duty suffices to ruin any one's digestion," is a saying at Court, and, it might be added, "it's enough to spoil one's *savoir-vivre* too." In the fashionable restaurant at the Hôtel de Rome, in Berlin, a little old man was pointed out to me by a friend from the provinces.

"I am astonished," said my escort, "that they allow so ill-mannered a person in this place."

"You mean the white-haired and beribboned gentleman in the corner?"

"The same, who swings his toothpick so furiously."

"Why, it is Count ——, chamberlain to the Empress Frederick."

"Really? And who may be the gentleman with him who strokes his long mutton-chops over his soup-plate?"

"That is President, formerly Minister, von Puttkammer."

"But they behave like pigs. Do they learn that at the royal table?"

"Nonsense; in the presence of their Majesties they are under such awful restraint, that, off duty, they let themselves loose, like boys escaped from boarding-school, drink out of their saucers, and wipe their mouths on their sleeves."

The guests and attendants at table are in gala or demi toilet, most of the younger officers being as tightly corseted as the ladies, while all the men wear the narrowest of uniforms, that scarcely allow them to breathe. Add to this feeling of physical distress the overpowering anxiety of preparing for the supreme moment when the Kaiser or Kaiserin shall address one of them, or give the signal for laughter, and it will be obvious at once that taking pot-luck with Prussia's royalty has its drawbacks.

But the most miserable person of the glittering assemblage is she who wears the costliest gown, the biggest of diamonds. At meal-time the Kaiser chooses to make a display of his conversational gifts, or rather his wit; and Auguste Victoria knows only too well that she cannot rival the one, and that the other is out of her reach. So she sits quietly, addressing little nothings to her ladies in an undertone from time to time, while painfully alert, that none of His Majesty's jokes and innuendoes escape her.

William seldom speaks to his wife directly, except to say that he likes or dislikes her costume; and if she asks questions, he answers in a tone that forbids further conversation; quite frequently he does not reply at all, turning his left ear toward the Empress and affecting not to hear her.

At such moments, when pride and love must rage in her bosom, we all feel deeply for Her Majesty. Sometimes she appears ready to cry in the face of everybody; but the woman in her must forever give way to the Queen, and so she swallows her mortification, sits still, and smiles, her little gray eyes languidly fixed on the husband so eager to shine as a humorist.

Ah, the sorry attempts at jesting that guests at the royal board must endure! By reeling off any absurdity that may come into his head, the Kaiser tries "to put life into the company," as he calls it, and his remarks, usually addressed to one of the adjutants, provoke peals of laughter, as a matter of course, as soon as the author gives the cue for hilarity by accentuating the end of his speech with a roar. The person spoken to must pay back in the same coin, and, naturally, does his best, for His Majesty admires nothing so much as the gift of repartee. But for all that, the rejoinder is frequently as weak, or weaker even, than the pleasantry that occasioned it. It is one thing to be a lord among wits, and another to be a wit among lords.

"Why is my big brother like the *Fliegende Blätter* in a foreign country?" asked Prince Henry of a small circle of sympathizing relatives during a recent visit of our Court in Kiel.

All the highnesses, royal and otherwise, gave it up.

"Because," quoth Henry, "he is always sure of raising a laugh whether he offers something witty or inane. So it is with the *Fliegende Blätter.* It has a reputation

for being funny, and, where German is not understood, is applauded indiscriminately."

Supper at the Court is no more entertaining than the midday meal: the same stiff-necked formality, the same strain after effect; the Kaiser endeavoring to be his own merry-Andrew, the rest of the company dull for the most part. As to the Empress, she remains as impassive as ever, smiling in her subdued manner; only her corsage is considerably lower, and she wears an extra handful or two of jewels. An extreme *décolleté* is Her Majesty's strong point; but, despite allurements of toilet and the assiduity with which her charms are set off, William cannot be induced to remain in his wife's presence a minute longer than courtesy demands. As soon as coffee is served (in Potsdam this is done in the so-called *Tassen Zimmer*, an apartment modelled in the shape of a cup and the furniture of which is so constructed as to assist that illusion), the Emperor takes himself off with his men friends and attendants and repairs to the billiard-room, where he sits for hours, with one leg on the table, swinging the other to and fro, while his adjutants and guests entertain him with imitations of music-hall and circus people, small talk, and droll stories of the coarsest grain, reeking with the fume of the drill-grounds and the barrack-mess.

This love of *risqué* stories is a Hohenzollern failing; contemporary writers agree that Frederick the Great shunned woman's society because it obliged him to bridle his tongue and observe the ordinary decencies of life; the "romantic" Frederick William IV was a trafficker in classical and modern pornographic literature, and the present Kaiser's grossness of speech is notorious enough to find an echo in the imperial nursery. Apropos of this, a funny thing happened several years ago, when Major von Falkenhayn, then governor of the older princes, complained to His

Majesty that his first-born constantly used a very nasty word against his brothers and playmates.

"The devil!" cried the Kaiser; "he must be broken of that; but where did the little *Scheisskerl* (the very same phrase complained of) hear that expression?"

An incident like the one concerning the wicked Teckels, mentioned in another chapter, is at all times sure of royal appreciation. William will talk for weeks about it, and neither his friends nor the dignitaries of state with whom he comes in contact are spared the recital, including disgusting details. Indeed, three-quarters of the time when the public imagines William to be wrestling with problems of the day he sits on the billiard-table in the described attitude, with his adjutants and the chief members of his military and civil households standing around him, smoking cigarettes and telling stories, and listening to tales affecting personages of the Court and society here and abroad.

And while this lascivious tattle is carried on, Her Majesty sits, perchance, in the Cup Room, magnificently gowned, knitting shapeless little woollen caps for orphan asylums, and talking religion and cheap charity schemes to her grand-master, Baron Mirbach, or to the much-beloved von der Knesebeck. What contrasts! what dissimulation! I often thought to myself, when, being in attendance upon Her Majesty, the echo of sneering allusions to a friend's or acquaintance's wife or daughter wafted past me through the door of the billiard-room, left ajar by some lackey with his tablet, or opened by the Kaiserin's order, that she may feast her eyes on the husband she loves so well. The head of the nation, whose unceasing industry is the talk of the Continent, vainly trying to kill time with buffoonery; the sovereign lady, "mother of the poor," working penny caps in a gown the cost of which would keep for ten years the

poor boy or girl for whom the knitted thing is intended, and assure the little one a splendid education.

It is a saying at Court: "Give the Kaiser an up-to-date rendering of the 'Merry Jests of King Louis XI,' and you will receive a standing invitation to accompany him on his Northland trips; tell him something more indelicate than the 'Tattle of the Nuns of Poissy,' and he will book you for an ambassadorship;" and that is no exaggeration, as will be seen in the chapter on William's boon companions.

The Kaiser's inclination for the ludicrous even intrudes itself into "business of state;" for, as he considers his ministers but royal servants of high degree, so are Court functions regarded by him as *quasi* affairs of government.

"When I have to stand three or four hours to see a few thousand persons pass by, I like to get some fun out of it, if possible," I heard him say to Court-marshal Count Eulenburg, when the latter reported, at the New Year's reception of 1896, that some six thousand persons had made application for the *grand Cour*, the German Drawing Room.

"At Your Majesty's command," answered Eulenburg, promptly; and, as the little blonde courtier withdrew, the Kaiser turned to the Empress: "What is this devil of a Eulenburg up to? I asked him to make the *Schleppen Cour* endurable, and he positively smiled assent. I hope he will not hire a troop of the great unwashed to masquerade before us in the guise of Socialist deputies."

The Court-marshal had, of course, no thought of forcing things, but shrewdly surmised that, among the thousands of new-comers anxious to make their first bow before royalty, and among the old friends ready to pay their respects at the beginning of the season of festivities, some one, of a surety, would furnish food for amusement.

As it happened, one of the persons to be presented was a Countess von Arnim, *née* Countess von der Schulenberg, who is exceedingly short-sighted. Eulenburg knew her infirmity, and was, perhaps, thinking of it when smiling acquiescence to William's proposition. At any rate, contrary to custom, he let Her Ladyship proceed to the throne *sans* guide, and she bravely passed both their Majesties without obeisance.

Everybody stared, and I confess myself to having felt extremely uncomfortable; but, happily, the Kaiser, remembering his Court-marshal's promise, overlooked the slight to his dignity.

"*Adieu, gnädige Frau!*" his sharp voice rang out,—"adieu, and no matter if you have the advantage of us."

At the same moment, the poor Countess, who had meanwhile reached one of the embrasures of the windows, bowed to the ground, thinking that by this time she stood in front of the throne, and then, hearing the Kaiser's sarcastic remark, promptly swooned.

Next day, at noon, she reported to Countess Brockdorff to submit her excuses, and was astonished to learn that His Majesty had given orders to invite her to dinner.

"The Kaiser wants to have more fun with me!" cried poor Arnim.

"Not at all; he desires to thank you for the diversion offered during that tedious ceremony."

"I vouch for that," said Eulenburg, when appealed to, "and, in proof of His Majesty's gracious feelings, I extend the invitation to include Madame's charming daughter." He added: "Whoever amuses the King cannot be too well treated."

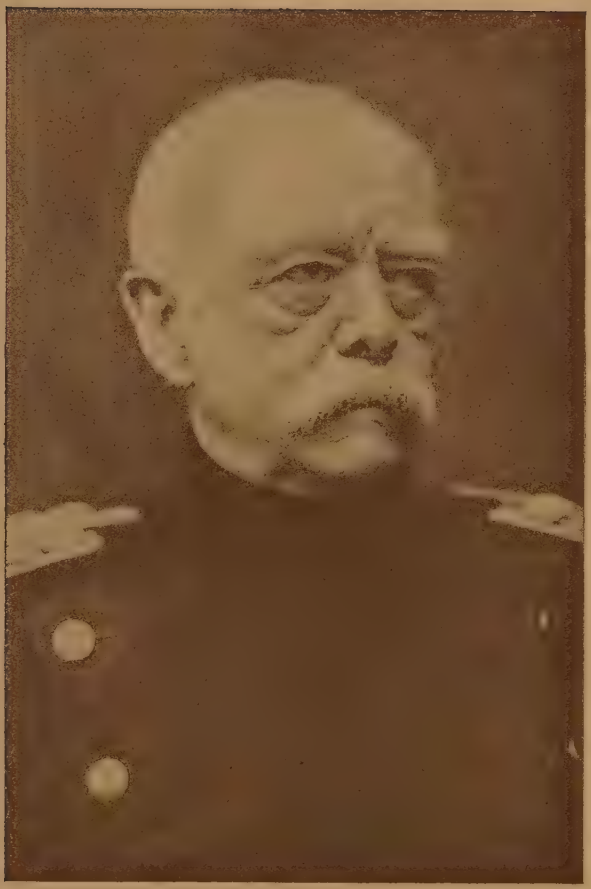
And, as a matter of fact, the Countess and Mademoiselle were nearly smothered with kindness by their Majesties; I do not know of any persons, comparative strangers, who were so well treated at Court as these ladies.

The Grand Cour of 1897 was likewise relieved by a ludicrous incident. On that occasion a Fräulein von Bonin had essayed to represent a lily; and not only her entire dress, including the train, was made to bear out that idea, but on each side of her coiffure two Easter lilies rose high above her, nodding to and fro with every movement.

"Good Lord!" said the Kaiser *sotto voce*, but so loud that the chamberlain on duty could hear it, as this botanical wonder passed by, "I hope B—— (naming one of his brothers-in-law) won't see her. He might take it for an allusion to the pretty calf-colored antlers his wife is growing on his forehead." At this, the Empress, who does not like the lady alluded to, burst out laughing, and it took the imperial couple some minutes to regain their composure.

That in the feverish hunt after amusements and excitement, family life at the German Court, of which the contemporary press makes so much, is a delusion, goes without saying, though, to accuse William of neglecting his Frau, in the ordinary sense of the word, would, perhaps, be unjust, for he keeps up appearances in a general way, and I have reasons to believe that he loves his wife. Yet he has a knack of forgetting her very existence whenever he thinks he is better off alone, which, I know, is extremely painful to Auguste Victoria.

And the worst of it is, this fixed idea of complete self-sufficiency grows stronger and stronger with him as his egotism gradually develops into egomania. With all that, however, he is not an unkind husband, albeit his actions often imply great lack of conjugal gentleness and generosity. It is merely his boundless love of self that claims ascendency in his every action, no matter whether it affects the best friend he has in the world or his worst enemy. As in those awful days of San Remo, when he claimed, as representative of the old Emperor, precedence



Bismarck

over his afflicted mother on the way to the village church, so he uses his present supreme position as a club to intimidate all directly depending upon him into a state of quiet, but utter, submissiveness. And this has been going on so long that the Empress, on her part, has become used to it, and would think it queer, indeed, if this state of affairs were changed.

As to the children, they are there for dynastic purposes, to learn and to grow up; what more can be required? Her Majesty's complaint, that they hardly see their father, is true; seldom, if ever, do the youngsters appear at table, and the reports of their governor as to conduct and progress in learning must suffice, time for personal consultation or a friendly confab not being available.

"I am afraid the Kaiser will never take interest in the children until they actually enter military service," said the Empress to me, after I had read to her an article reporting His Majesty's speech on the occasion of Prince Adalbert's entry into the navy (June 24, 1894). Of course, I politely disagreed with Her Majesty on that point, but at the same time could not help thinking it would be a good thing if these fears were realized. Imagine a father taking his ten-year-old stripling by the hand, and, after presenting him to a regiment of gray-beards, battle-worn and noted for their education and courage, say to them: "This moment, when Prince Adalbert becomes one of you, is of the most eminent importance to the entire history of the Fatherland." Who would blame a boy, after that, for overbearing conduct and disinclination for study? If, at the age of ten, he be a historic personage, to whom old and tried men must look up as to an idol, a moulder of the nation's destinies, what is the use of further effort? Elagabalus became Roman Emperor at the age of fourteen, yet had to wait four years before he was recognized as a god.

To come back to our own times, compare William's eulogy of his son with the speeches the Kaiser's grandfather and father delivered at his own introduction to the army, on February 7, 1877, when, having reached his eighteenth year, he became a lieutenant in the First Guards.

Said the old Emperor: "The service expected of thee will require many functions that may appear petty and unnecessary in thy untried eyes. But thou must learn to understand that there is nothing trivial in doing one's duty, and that each stone in the construction of our army must be well hewn and thoroughly anchored, if the grand edifice shall stand. And now I commit thee to thy labors, which fulfil as thy superiors dictate."

And the father, afterward Emperor Frederick, said:

"I am proud that my son is privileged to commence his military studies in the First Guards, and I congratulate him on his good luck. He ought to be proud to wear your uniform, and I commend him to your good graces, my comrades."

While not particularly loving toward his wife, the Emperor honors her with excessive jealousy, and is beside himself with rage if a man-servant, ever so innocently, looks at Her Majesty when she is dressed in a *décolleté* costume. As Napoleon bounced M. Leroy, the Worth of his times, for complimenting Marie Louise on her fine shoulders, so William deals unmercifully with officials and servants who venture to look at his wife.

One day in the beginning of December, 1889, while the Kaiser was on the way to Dessau, Her Majesty went to bed early in the afternoon out of sheer chagrin, because she had not been allowed to accompany her husband, and, while reading a novel by lamp-light, she was disturbed by a stealthy noise at the door.

It made her sit up in eager expectation. Could it be possible that the Emperor had reconsidered his decision, and had returned to take her along as first promised? Auguste Victoria prepared to look extra charming; but who shall describe her terror, when, instead of the expected husband, the black curly head of a man-servant, bearing a load of fire-wood on his shoulder, appeared, and cautiously spied about to see if he might enter.

The Empress gave a scream of rage and agony, while a crash, as if a hundred-weight of sticks had come to the ground, and hurrying footsteps, told the fate of the transgressor.

A second later the luncheon of Kammerfrau von Haake, and of the wardrobe and chamber women eating in the maids' ordinary down-stairs, was disturbed by incessant ringing of the electric bells from the royal apartment. It was at once evident that Her Majesty was pressing her hand against the row of electric buttons at her bedside. What could have happened? Had fire broken out, and was the Kaiserin in dire distress?

The women ran to the bedroom, despatching several lackeys they met on the way to notify the house-marshal, chamberlains, and Court-physicians, as they expected to find their mistress half-dead at the very least. When they burst into the room, however, they quickly perceived that their apprehensions were exaggerated: the august Lady was not hurt, nor was she in any visible peril, but, instead, sat up in bed shaking with indignation. "A thief, or at any rate a man, entered my room stealthily," cried Her Majesty, gasping for breath. "The matter must be fully investigated, and His Majesty must be informed at once. Let the intruder be arrested and brought to justice without delay."

The unhappy quartet of servants, von Haake, Schwerdtfeger, Gleim, and Schade, were speechless. "It would

kill His Majesty to receive such a despatch," suggested the Kammerfrau at last, and the Empress decided to consult with her grand-mistress, Gräfin Brockdorff.

I happened to be in the Countess's apartment when Frau Schade and Frau Gleim came to report in breathless monosyllables.

"A man in the Kaiserin's chamber—impossible!" cried Brockdorff, adding: "it will cost us our positions if His Majesty hears of it."

"Maybe the Kaiserin has been dreaming; she had cold pork for second breakfast," I put in.

"No, it is really true, others besides Her Majesty have heard his steps," said Frau Gleim.

At this moment, Madame von Larisch, mistress of the household, entered to know the cause of the uproar that was shaking the palace to its foundations. "If you will wait here for a little while, you shall hear it all," said Gräfin Brockdorff, already in the corridor. Returning after fifteen minutes, Her Excellency walked right over to where I was sitting with Frau von Larisch, and, assuming her most haughty tone, addressed her in these words: "By command of Her Majesty, I have to announce to you the all-highest disfavor. I think it would be best if you packed your *Siebensachen* (duds) and left at once."

Madame von Larisch drew herself up. "Your Excellency," she said, "I demand an explanation."

"Your Ladyship shall have it and without delay. Her Majesty distinctly commanded me to take off your head, '*reissen Sie ihr den Kopf ab*,' and I have merely given the implied meaning of the all-highest words."

"But what s it all about?" I saw that it was high time to interfere between the two ladies, who had never shown much love for each other.

"While Her Majesty was in bed," said the Countess, with much deliberation, "one of the fire-place attendants entered with a load of wood, and the Kaiserin blames Frau von Larisch for the intrusion; this after I had succeeded in demonstrating to the august Lady that the man must necessarily be innocent, for he could not know that Her Majesty was in the house. However, Kammerherr von der Knesebeck had to telegraph the whole incident, with all details, to Dessau."

Several hours later the whole palace knew that Johann, the wood-boy, had been instantly dismissed without compensation for his loss of pension, and a bad "character" into the bargain. Frau von Larisch, to everybody's surprise, went unpunished, while next morning an autograph letter from His Majesty arrived, commanding that henceforth no male servant should enter the joint bedroom or the Kaiserin's dressing-room, all the work, including wood and water carrying, taking up of carpets, etc., being thrown upon the maids.

This incident has a sequel, for, Her Majesty being as fastidious about girls in her room (when the Kaiser is present) as William is about man-servants, she is now obliged to make her own fire in the grate on chilly mornings whenever her husband is at home. What a parody on royal state this,—the Empress-Queen getting up in her "nightie," and in the cold and damp, to light her own fire! Verily, truth is stranger by far than fiction!

Although very partial to courtly splendor and festivities, which cause a conflux of people, the Kaiser hates nothing more than the *fêtes* which etiquette compels him to hold annually in the Berlin Schloss; he hates them principally because that magnificent pile, appearing so formidable from the outside, and which was designed for Brandenburg society at the beginning of the eighteenth

century, is entirely inadequate to the accommodation of the many thousands nowadays privileged to dance attendance upon, and actually dance, eat, and drink with the Kaiser and Kaiserin.

Of course there is always room for the sovereign, no matter if his company be packed like sardines; the discomfort of his guests does not trouble him, either, but the ocular demonstration of the unsuitableness of his house does; it sorely aggravates him to be reminded of the fact that he is not rich enough to build reception-rooms equal to the demands of the times.

"If my ancestors could afford to construct this castle, why should not I erect one suitable to *my* requirements?" he argues, forgetting the fact that not the Hohenzollerns, but the Prussian people, paid for the Schloss and were all but bankrupted in doing so, the builders, Elector Frederick and the first two Kings of Prussia, meanwhile promising to pay back the millions wrung from their pockets—when their alchemist had succeeded in making yellow metal. So the castle was finished under false pretences, and the necromancer, being unable to keep his word, was hanged—all of which happened one hundred and seventy-five years or more ago.

The winter *fêtes* at the Prussian Court are institutions in their way, the splendor of which the favor or disfavor of the monarch may enhance or reduce, but even the sovereign's enmity—such as William bears to these festive entertainments—cannot blot them out. To do that would seem too much like breaking with time-honored customs and taking away the perquisites of two mighty classes in the state: the trades-people's profits, and the aristocracy's chief opportunity for disporting its few remaining hereditary privileges. Only in case of Court mourning, or great national disasters, may the list be curtailed, and never was

a Prussian King more eager to take advantage of these means of escape than William is.

When, on January 4, 1896, his granduncle, Prince Alexander of Prussia, died, his first words were: "Now we may rid ourselves of the company of our unknown friends, the sweet plebs, for this winter at least," and Grand-master Count Eulenburg was straightway ordered to recall the invitations for carnival and abandon the engagements with purveyors, etc., already entered into. Yet one cannot mourn a relative of the seventh or eighth degree forever, and the Kaiser all the more readily consented to give one more ball before the end of the season, as the municipal council of Berlin at that time was particularly obstreperous, and as it was expected that by a lavish expenditure of money flowing into the people's coffers its good offices could be gained. So, when almost everybody had given up the hope of dancing and supping "at the Kaiser's," several thousand ladies and gentlemen were made happy by receiving the well-known "commands."

Then came that affair with Ambassador Herbette, the political side of which is public property. The representative of La Belle France objected to the intimacy that had sprung up between the Kaiser and the French naval *attaché*, M. de Graucy. "If you understand your business, you must know that you are nothing but a well-paid and highly-ornamental spy," he is reported to have said to de Graucy; "how can you serve your country in that capacity, if you allow yourself to be bamboozled by imperial favors and dazzled by the monarch's amiableness and charm of speech?"

To the Emperor, who had asked him as a personal favor to desist from his resolution to procure M. de Graucy's immediate recall, the brave Herbette made answer: "*Parbleu*, Your Majesty, I insist upon doing my house-cleaning in my own way."

These two speeches are matters of historic record, in substance, if not literally, and I may add that the above version is from the Kaiser's own lips;—I was present when His Majesty reported the case to the Empress. What the world does not know, is the double meaning of the Frenchman's allusion to house-cleaning. An ambassador, like other great lords, has two families, a personal and an official one. De Graucy belonged to the latter, and Herbette disowned him as soon as so extreme a measure seemed called for. But by that time stories of the Kaiser's *faible* for the beautiful Madame Herbette had reached the ears of her complacent husband; invariably the last individual to hear a rumor of that kind.

In the present case, scant secrecy had been observed; frequenters of Pariser Platz, where the Embassy is located, had noticed the Emperor's phaeton and pair in front of the hotel for half-hours at a time day by day, and had talked about it, first to curse William's apparent zeal in running after the Frenchman; afterward, when they had learned of the existence of a beautiful woman in the mansion, to smile approvingly and wish the sovereign success on his excursions into the enemy's camp.

At Court, the ice had been broken by a remark of the Princess of Meiningen, who said one day, when the Kaiser's love for France was discussed: "Yes, and I understand he has the good taste to be wanting in respect to a Frenchwoman of *esprit*, whom we all know;" but, as far as my information goes, neither Her Royal Highness nor those beer philosophers in the Linden *cafés* possessed a shadow of proof to back up their abominable tattle. There was probably nothing at all in this talk, yet, whether there was or not, Herbette decided to stop it. When the invitations for the Court ball arrived, he accepted with a few polite phrases, but three days before the affair came

off he caused Madame to send her regrets, saying that His Excellency alone would be able to do himself the honor to attend the ball.

House-marshal Baron von Lyncker happened to have business in the Kaiser's study when the perfumed note bearing the ambassadress's initials in silver arrived. "His Majesty," he says, "tore open the letter, and, scanning its contents, exclaimed: 'Advise Eulenburg that the ball is off. He must at once recall the invitations.'

"At Your Majesty's orders," said the dutiful Herr von Lyncker, "but as the greater part of the delicacies for the buffets are already in the hands of the chefs and pastry-cooks, while the sweetmeats were delivered a few hours ago, what is Your Majesty's pleasure with respect to these goods?"

The Emperor had listened with every indication of impatience.

"Never mind, the stuff that cannot be used in the house may be sent to the hospitals," he said when the House-marshal had finished. Then, walking straight up to him and staring with flaming eyes into space, the Kaiser continued: "Do you know why I disappoint these several thousand invited persons at the last moment? Because I cannot permit Herbette to again set foot in my house. *He* wants to come, but he shall not. Indeed, I would rather see this Schloss in ruins than spend an evening with him in the same room."

He read Madame Herbette's letter a second time, and, acting as if a sudden thought had struck him, added: "The news that de Graucy is to go has just been confirmed. It is a direct insult and scandal. I will not rest until Herbette is made to leave Berlin."

CHAPTER V

The Kaiser has many nick-names; Reise-Kaiser (Drummer-Emperor), Gondola-Billy, Wilhelm-der-Plötzliche (William-the-Sudden) being the most common; but the people of the palace call him Der Einzige (The Only), with apologies to Frederick the Great, who also enjoyed that title, though for vastly different reasons,—*The Only*, now that Liebenau is gone.

Major von Liebenau was a man after William's own heart, his double in more than one respect.

A lieutenant in the First Guards, he attracted the then Prince William's attention by the same characteristics that, it is claimed, at one time cemented the friendship between the heir to the German crown and the young man destined to inherit, besides Varzin, the Chancellorship of the Empire, the Presidency of the Prussian Ministry of State, and all the rest of his father's dignities. William, Herbert Bismarck, von Liebenau,—a triumvirate of ambition, libertinage, and insolence!

It was in the winter of 1886 and 1887, when William studied statecraft in the foreign office under Count Herbert's tutelage, that Liebenau got his real foothold in the princely *ménage*, then established in the Marble Palace, which he ruled with a high hand. At the same time the heir to the crown was revelling in the charms of divers queens of tragedy, comedy, and the ballet, connected with the royal play and opera houses, taking his cue about

"the only use woman's fit for" from Count Herbert, who never spoke of the other sex except in the coarsest of terms.

For the young wife who saw herself reduced to the position of the "Holstein," good enough to fill a succession of royal cribs ranging in size like the pipes of an organ, but rigidly excluded from her husband's world of ideas and ambitions, which, perhaps, she did not comprehend, but, for all that, endorsed with touching sincerity, these were indeed unhappy days.

How often she has poured the story of her mortification and disappointment into mine and the Countess Brockdorff's ears! Poor Princess! she had been brought up to the sober truth that royal women must get used to dividing their husband with others, and bowed her blonde head under the historic bane not with the worst of grace. What rent her heart was William's cynical way of regarding woman's supreme duty and highest honor,—motherhood.

"I don't want to be looked upon as a means for propagating the royal race exclusively," she cried once; "but, under Count Bismarck's teachings, the Prince seems to have forgotten that I possess any womanly qualities besides that of child-bearing."

Fearful lest Her Royal Highness's hatred of Count Herbert might lead her to rash remarks in the presence of the old Emperor and her husband, with both of whom young Bismarck was *persona grata*, I tried to intervene by suggesting that he was not altogether a bad man, having fought with distinction in the French war.

"Yes, yes, I heard that *ad nauseam*," interrupted Auguste Victoria, impatiently; "he is said to have received three balls, and since then has made three of our sex extremely miserable,—that person in Bonn, who caused the duel; the poor Princess Carolath, and myself."

Countess Brockdorff, who then, as now, held the post of grand-mistress, flared up at this: "I must not suffer Your Royal Highness to class yourself with these females," she said; "it is morbid excitement that consumes you."

After that, I thought it my duty to inform the Princess Imperial of the state of affairs.

"Myself and husband," she said, "know all about this vicious Herbert and the evil influence he has over our son, but," and Her Imperial Highness lowered her voice, "there is bound to be a change in a few years, you know, and the Kaiser that will be is determined to clear the decks (*reinen Tisch zu machen*)."

When Victoria said this, the old Emperor was nearly ninety years of age, and though the first signs of Frederick's terrible illness had already manifested themselves, no one dreamed of the quick and awful end. However, the sovereign Lady kept her word, as far as it was possible for her to do under the painful circumstances that attended her husband's reign, and no matter how often Prince Bismarck deputized his son to transact business with Frederick during the ninety-nine days, he was as often sent away and ordered to tell the Chancellor that His Majesty desired to confer with no one but His Grace in person.

"It is the death-knell of the Bismarck dynasty," Count Seckendorf used to say when about to deliver one of these messages to the haughty secretary.

The fall of the Bismarcks is a matter of history, but that the present Empress played a decisive part in it, few, if any, writers have a notion of. It is true, Auguste Victoria dreaded her husband's parting with the Prince, but feared even more the constant intimate relations between William and Herbert; and while she once succeeded in striking his name from the list of guests on the Northland trip, giving his place to her "uncle," Count Waldersee,

who assiduously worked against the Iron Chancellor's interests during the journey, Count Herbert was invited to accompany the Kaiser to England and on the Oriental tour, mainly, it was rumored, on account of his boast that, as Secretary of Foreign Affairs, he would find ways and means to open the doors of the Sultan's harem to His Majesty.

Whether Herbert made such insane promises I cannot say; enough that my mistress believed he did, and persuaded Countess Waldersee to believe it also. Her Excellency, you know, is a most pious woman, and Herbert necessarily figured in her inventory of proscribed persons with a big "H," as Baron von Mirbach put it. (The German word for Hades, like the English, commences with an "h.")

How the two august ladies worked for the downfall of the hated man: a few pin-thrusts here, an allusion to the old Chancellor's ambition to set up a throne beside the throne there; "Crown-Prince Herbert," "Woman-beater Herbert," "Son of his father," and what not? And in the end: "Down goes the mantle, and the Prince, he follows."

Of the old Chancellor, guilty of two unpardonable sins, that of possessing undoubted popularity, far exceeding the Emperor's, and a hearty disinclination to accommodate himself, after years of supreme rule, to the part William intended for him—of this "obstreperous servant" the Kaiser had been tired for a long time, and the separation enforced in March, 1890, was nothing if not premeditated. Indeed, the Kaiser's inviolable intention to dismiss the "old man," as he called him, was expressed as far back as October, 1889, the repository of imperial confidence at that time being no other than Czar Alexander.

The Czar was the last of the great monarchs to repay the Kaiser's visit, and was frosty and ceremonious in the

extreme upon his arrival,—a circumstance which, strange to say, filled the Empress with joy.

"Thank God," she said to the Countess Brockdorff and myself, while waiting for the dinner signal, "if the Czar's ill-humor continues, there can be no more talk of that betrothal," meaning the contemplated engagement between the Czarowitz and Her Majesty's sister-in-law, Princess Marguerite of Prussia.

Well, the ill-humor did not continue,—it vanished after the Czar had had a long talk with Prince Bismarck; the Kaiser was pleased outwardly, but extremely mortified that the Chancellor, not himself, had brought about the change.

"This Bismarck is forever assuming his sovereign's functions," he growled, and, in order to have Alexander's ear exclusively, he hurriedly arranged a hunting expedition in the royal forest at Eberswalde.

On this occasion the *pourparlers* about the betrothal were renewed, and—according to the Empress, who was disturbed at the prospect of losing another relative in the realms of the Greek Church—progressed favorably at first, but, unfortunately for his own great designs and luckily for the Kaiserin's pious scruples, His Majesty could not constrain himself to follow up his success by the premature announcement, made strictly *sub rosâ*, that he intended to dismiss Bismarck at an early opportunity.

As Alexander could see only the forerunner of grave complications in such a course, our northern guest grew visibly cold on the last day of his visit, and thereafter confined himself to evasive answers when the betrothal was mentioned.

While this proves beyond doubt that the parting with the Chancellor was long premeditated, I am quite sure, from remarks made off and on by my royal mistress, that

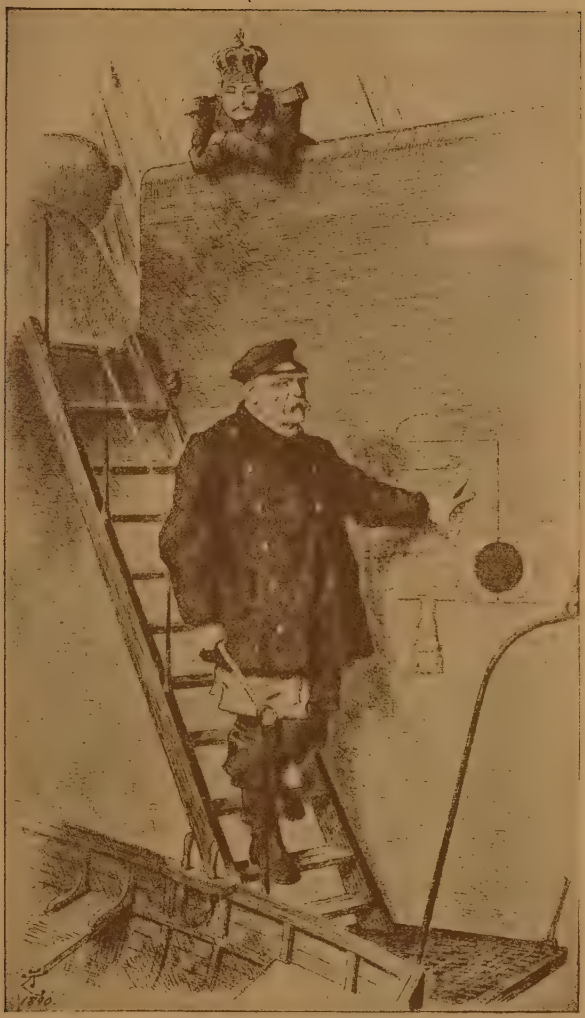
the Kaiser had no notion whatever of getting rid of Count Herbert too. Only the gross coercion used against the "old man" on the one hand, and on the other the fact that Bismarck, when making the historic appeal to the Empress Frederick,—"his last stand,"—learned that the petticoat *camarilla* had worked against his son as diligently as the Kaiser's increasing querulousness and thirst for independence opposed retention of office by himself,—this aggravating circumstance alone forced resignation upon the Count. With respect to the meeting in the old *Kronprinzen-Palais Unter den Linden,* I know for a certainty that His Majesty's mother, when refusing to interfere on the Chancellor's behalf, spoke unreservedly of the evil influence which Herbert had exercised upon her son, and recited how much the Empress had suffered by it. These facts, Auguste Victoria, though otherwise not given to adulation of her mother-in-law, has often mentioned.

After that, persons of delicacy quickly recognized the only course left open to Herbert; but the Emperor, swayed by his own likes and dislikes and looking neither to the right nor left, gave his former friend an opportunity to insult him.

"And what will *you* do?" he asked the Secretary of State.

"Follow my father," answered Herbert, with fine spirit.

So much for the Herbert Bismarck *intermezzo.* Liebenau, though more the Kaiser's *alter ego* than the Count, was never on terms of intimacy with William, who selected him as Major-domo, when, after his marriage, the princely household was established, for the same reason that, in 1897, prompted his nomination of a general of cavalry for the position of Reichs Postmaster, viz.: because he was a good driller, a disciplinarian of the sort that does his master's bidding without the slightest thought of the



DROPPING THE PILOT
The Famous Cartoon from London "Punch"

feelings of others. An official reputed to carry out orders unflinchingly and, if need be, unscrupulously, is very apt to attract a man of William's arbitrary temperament.

There was still another point speaking in von Liebenau's favor. At the time William's household was established, His Royal Highness's income was a little over $50,000 per year, a mere bagatelle, considering the pretensions of both master and mistress; but the Court-marshal, coming from a family in which the Prussian saying, "Golden collar—Stomach hollow," has had practical demonstration through generations of uniformed, spurred, and sabred vaingloriousness and misery, promised to carry on the stewardship that would have been moribund in most other hands, to a nicety,—promised it, and kept his promise. He did more. During the first two or three years, at least, he managed to set aside for the personal use of the Prince all the money needed. Later on, debts were contracted; they were not of Liebenau's making, though.

But, while ingratiating himself with William's household and, in fact, with the entire royal family,—for the old Emperor, as well as the Crown Prince and the young man's uncles and aunts, held very decided opinions on the subject of His Royal Highness's money-spending proclivities,—this "mounted beggar," as the late Empress Augusta called him, proclaimed his natural inclination for the noble art of browbeating by regulating his conduct toward the house officials and servants in every respect after his master's example. As stated, he was not a member of Prince William's inner circle of friends; but His Royal Highness's intimacy with Count Herbert, whose sentiments toward women were notorious, sufficed as a cue for Liebenau's official intercourse with the Princess. Outwardly loyalty itself (I doubt whether a more loquacious reciter of courtly phrases

and of assurances of respect and humility ever addressed a royal lady in our days), nothing seemed to give this intriguer more satisfaction than to refuse, on the plea of expenditure, whatever the future Empress expressed a wish for in the way of food, or petty luxury, not on the daily list.

"Think of it, Countess," she said to me one morning in the spring of 1888, "this Liebenau refused me a glass of Madeira for second breakfast, claiming his budget would not permit such extravagance when we are alone, there being hardly enough to set the table as it ought to be set when the Prince himself is present.

"'My appropriation scarcely warrants the purchase of expensive wines for His Royal Highness's own consumption,' he had the impudence to tell me. I nearly choked with anger."

When William became Crown Prince, Liebenau retained his position at the head of the largely augmented household; but, on assuming the throne, the Kaiser kept him on the anxious bench many weeks before the rank and title of Chief Grand-marshal of the Court and House was bestowed on the ex-captain of the Body-guard Battalion. Yet, no sooner had his highest ambition been realized, then Liebenau began to outroyal royalty. He established a reign of terror at the palace, as William had done, to a certain extent, in some departments of government; but, while the Kaiser waited until May, 1891, before promulgating his boast and threat: "There is but one master in the Reich,—none other will I tolerate" (in the speech before the Rhenish Provincial Diet), Liebenau at once made it clear to everybody in the imperial household that he was the real King's lieutenant, vested with absolute power, from whose decisions no appeal could be had. And that was not idle talk, either, for in domestic affairs the Kaiser listened to no one but him.

Thus, with a master the very reverse of polite, accessible, or generous, and a submaster trying to outdo the other in arbitrariness and contemptuous treatment of all beneath him in rank or social station, our Court was in a wretched plight during the time from August, 1889, to February, 1890, and the Empress's ladies especially suffered from this barrack regime. Our private apartments in the Schloss at that time left much to wish for, as indeed they do now; but whenever Countess von Brockdorff, or any of us, ventured to suggest the slightest improvement to the Court-marshal, that functionary cut short our complaints in the rudest manner possible. And not only that: even the Empress's orders, transmitted by one of us, were treated much in the same insolent fashion, so that the whole Court, our august mistress with the rest, was kept in a perpetual turmoil. Time and again have the offended ladies prepared to lay their cases before His Majesty, but Frau von Liebenau appeared as often bathed in tears to implore forgiveness and avert a scandal. This woman, *née* von Maassen, is directly descended from a Berlin tailor's family of Jewish extraction named Freytag, and Madame was as unpopular in our circles as her husband, but, by studiously humbling herself, always carried her point.

The male dignitaries and officials of the imperial household fared no better than ourselves under the King's lieutenant, and disgraceful rows and minor disturbances were of almost daily occurrence in the palace, while the servants, besides being subjected to the coarsest treatment, had to endure threats of corporal punishment. Indeed, if Herr von Liebenau had been trying, in a small, end-of-the-nineteenth-century way to revive memories of the days of Frederick William I, "whom it is a flattering euphemism to call a savage," he could not have gone about it in a more thorough manner.

These browbeatings and bullyings continued uninterrupted and unpunished until February, 1890, when the omnipotent Pooh-Bah happened to run amuck of General von Wittich, at that time chief of royal head-quarters, who, being offered insolence, threw down his gloves, and, shaking his fist in the Court-marshal's face, cried: "If you were not so far beneath me, I would challenge you."

Von Wittich immediately reported the incident to the Emperor, and His Majesty, who was unwilling to lose the General, concluded that Liebenau needed some of his own medicine. So he sent for him.

"I will assume that your quarrelsomeness is the outcome of overwork and nervous excitement," he said, forestalling explanations; "you will leave this evening for a six weeks' holiday." Then he turned on his heel, while the Court-marshal, half dazed, bowed himself out.

"Liebenau disgraced,—Prince Radolin his successor,"—the news spread through the house like wild-fire, and was discussed in Her Majesty's chambers no less eagerly than in the corridors and kitchen; maids congratulated the *Hofdamen*, and the imperial adjutants, the flunkies; even in the circles of the Court society the event was considered important enough for general rejoicings.

But six weeks do not last an eternity, and at the end of his vacation Liebenau seemed to be as much of a favorite as ever. In fact, the Emperor appeared to welcome back with much satisfaction his double, from whose resemblance to his own self he had recoiled in a moment of anger. This Court-marshal, who understood how to keep a numerous retinue in utter subjection, and, moreover, was capable of enforcing savings where an official reared in a more opulent sphere would fain insist upon greater liberality, "was really a very useful person, whose zeal deserved recognition,"—these were the Kaiser's own words to

Prince Radolin when the latter took his leave. What a triumph for Liebenau, upon whom we had begun to look as an officially dead man!

And as if the reinstated one meant to make up for lost time, the disgraceful wrangles of the past year were renewed the moment he showed his face again; mess-room jargon and curses once more superseded the conciliating tone brought back by Prince Radolin, and never was penny-pinching carried further at this outwardly so gorgeous royal establishment than after the renaissance of the Liebenau regime. The Court-marshal even went so far as to reduce the number of servants, and lay the work of the discharged men and women upon the shoulders of those remaining. William approved of this and similar measures *en bloc*. And small wonder. His lieutenant was held in such abject fear that no one dared complain, and the money saved by Liebenau's skinflint system was three times welcome to swell the travel, building, and amusement funds.

So thick became the new friendship between Emperor and Court-marshal that the latter had the effrontery to ask that the next vacant ambassadorship be reserved for him.

The Kaiser did not promise to consider the petition (just then "the old man—Bismarck—was having his last breathing-spell;" *Ich will den Alten verschnaufen lassen* was one of His Majesty's quaint sayings at that time when his attention was called to the Chancellor's opposition to his own absolute plans); but the fact that William failed to refuse indignantly to listen to the plan of his steward sufficed to inspire the supplicant with insane notions of greatness. Though himself belonging to the lower nobility, separated from bourgeoisdom but by the three letters "von," he began to exhibit more than ever his unlimited contempt for the masses. And that broke his official neck.

It appears that about the middle of May, 1890, the citizens of the town of Elbing, in West Prussia, learning that, during the latter part of the month, the Emperor intended to visit his friend, Count Dohna, in near-by Proeckelwitz, notified the Court-marshal's office of their intention to give His Majesty a big ovation when he passed through the town. The station was to be decorated with flags and bunting and greens, work was to be suspended, and the school-children and societies, not to mention the rest of the burghers who had escaped either dilemma, were to parade before His Majesty, dressed in their best, and singing "*Heil Dir im Siegerkranz.*"

"Elbing," mused Liebenau,—"is not that the place where the great ship-yards are located?" He looked up the social record of the town in his blue-book, and found none: "Nothing but laborers and shop-keepers, probably socialists most of them." He ordered his secretary to throw the petition into the waste-basket, and thought no more of it.

The Elbingers, on their part, when they received no reply, thought their loyal proposition accepted as a matter of course, and so entered upon extensive arrangements of decoration, the whole town working enthusiastically to make a splendid showing on the day of days.

At last, on May 27, toward 5 P.M., the imperial saloon-train hove into sight near Elbing depot. Upon this signal, all the town and church bells set to ringing, while the factory whistles blew their hardest, and the assembled masses, nearly ten thousand men, women, and children, began to shout, waving handkerchiefs and flags. The town band, too, brayed its finest, and a chorus of singing societies vociferated the German equivalent for "God Save the Queen" at the top of their voices. Finally, a bevy of blonde-haired and white-robed maidens, "masquerading

as virgins," as a Berlin localism has it, stood ready with half-faded bunches of flowers, repeating to themselves the words of welcome they had learned with so much difficulty.

But imagine their mortification, the disgust and rage of these thousands, many of whom had carefully weaned themselves from their democratic principles for this one occasion,—picture their perplexed looks, if you can, when the train, without lessening its speed, dashed through the multitudes lining the rails on both sides and disappeared in a cloud of dust and smoke even before the first verse of the national anthem was half finished.

However, the Elbingers' surprise was no greater than that of the man whom they had intended to honor. William was standing at one of the windows of his carriage, and had taken in the festive preparations at a glance.

"*Schützenfest*, I suppose?" said the Kaiser, turning to his suite.

"Beg Your Majesty's pardon, it looked more like a prearranged ovation in honor of your coming," replied one adjutant.

"I think I saw a triumphal arch bearing the all-highest's initials," said another.

The words set William thinking, and, upon his arrival at Proeckelwitz, he asked at once: "What was the occasion of the festive appearance of Elbing? The whole town seemed to be on its legs."

"Has not Your Majesty stopped to receive the homage of those sturdy workmen?"

"No, I had no idea that anything of the kind was intended."

"But the Court-marshal's office was notified in due form, and preparations have been going on these two weeks," said Count Dohna.

Of course, His Majesty was furious. Never was monarch so hungry for popular applause as William during the first two or three months after Bismarck's dismissal. Ever since the old Chancellor had thundered his proud "We will meet again!" into the teeth of imperial disgrace, William had flitted from banquet to review, to festivities at the opening or closing of schools, to laying of corner-stones, launching of yachts and steamers; he had paid court to all princes suspected of Bismarckian sympathies, had made conciliatory addresses to the Reichstag, had appealed for friendly support in Königsberg, and had even gone out of his way to honor his well-hated grandmother by a special state dinner on the occasion of her birthday; in short, he had done everything in his power to dissuade the German people from too much Bismarck discussion and to gain adherents to the imperial cause. And here was this Liebenau, a man whom he had raised to affluence and power, deliberately robbing him of the sweet concert of loyal approbation and setting a whole town, filled to overflowing with democratic ideas, by the ears.

An angry telegram to Berlin demanded an immediate explanation, while, at the same time, a very gracious message was sent to Elbing, explaining the situation and stating that His Majesty would be pleased to stop at the town upon his return from Count Dohna's place in a few days. Late in the evening, Liebenau's answer came. It was a hotchpotch of generalities, tempered by an implied charge of neglect against some unknown secretary. His Majesty needed but to mention this to loosen a veritable whirlwind of accusations against the doomed man, Count Dohna, who had never liked Liebenau, himself leading the assault.

Two days later, on May 30, at 9 A.M., I was sitting in the royal waiting-room of Friedrich Strasse railway depot, in Berlin, whither my mistress had sent me to notify the

Kaiser, upon his arrival, of some domestic arrangement. It was the day of the great spring parade, and His Majesty was billed to drive directly to the grounds where horses for himself and suite were waiting. At the door of the apartment, faultlessly dressed, the monocle in his left eye and the inevitable silk hat in hand, stood Herr von Liebenau, all smiles for the master, who arrived punctually, and, having alighted, crossed the perron, looking neither to the right nor left.

"A word with you," I heard him say to the Grand-marshal, without lessening his pace. "Herr von Liebenau" (His Majesty's accentuation was remarkably clear and icy that morning),—"Herr von Liebenau," he repeated, "this affair of Elbing has opened my eyes to your character and capabilities. I must tell you that I have no use for a person who sets my people against the sovereign. You have antagonized the whole Court and aristocracy besides. You are dismissed."

The Emperor had meanwhile reached the door leading into the street, which was quickly opened by the chasseur on the other side, and, followed by his adjutants, he strode out before I had a chance to deliver my message, or Liebenau found opportunity for explanations. When the last of the suite had vanished with clank of sabres and spurs (like their master, all were in full gala), I was face to face with the disgraced man.

"Roared at and kicked out like a drayman!—you have heard it, Countess," is all he said. Then he got into his splendid carriage to report to the master of ceremonies that he would not preside at the great functions of the state dinner to be held the same day at five o'clock in the afternoon.

The palace officials and servants celebrated Liebenau's dismissal by a banquet and "*Kneipe*," but William, after

his first anger had subsided, seemed to feel a sneaking pity for him. Perhaps that, reviewing Liebenau's weaknesses and blunders, he recognized in them the reflection of his own personality. The order of dismissal was irrevocable, but exile might be lightened by an act of courtesy or two, and a generous provision for the future. So His Majesty sent word to Liebenau that he need not be in a hurry to vacate his quarters in Sans Souci Park, and that his allowance of horses and servants, as well as his salary, would continue. Master and ex-servant met once more before parting, just previous to William's Northland trip at the end of June. The audience lasted two minutes.

In the following October we were surprised to find Herr and Frau von Liebenau's cards, marked "P. P. C.," in our morning mail, and everybody breathed freer. Only the Empress had a bad half-hour reading an impertinent letter "the tailor's daughter" sent to her, probably in acknowledgment of the many acts of magnanimity that Her Majesty had shown this woman. At the same time, it became known that Liebenau was to retain his salary of thirty thousand marks per year for life.

When the imperial couple visited Wiesbaden in the fall of 1896, the ex-favorite was once more graciously received, and even Her Majesty had to smile upon him and his wife, though I know it cost her pride a severe shock.

Although the regime of the *alter ego* came to an end half a dozen years ago, his influence is still felt at Court and even in the affairs of state, and if, sooner or later, judgment must be passed on the Kaiser's mental condition, the Liebenau bacillus deserves special investigation. It was Liebenau's reckless hard taskmastery which nourished and upheld the Kaiser's notion that he can make the impossible possible, that his word suffices to put seven-league irons on a tired horse and double and treble his people's capacity

for work. Another imperial idiosyncrasy, stimulated by Liebenau, was William's passion for travel, that guaranteed the Chief Court-marshal either considerable perquisites when accompanying His Majesty, or, if left behind, untrammelled dominion at home. I happen to have kept a record of the Kaiser's jaunts under the Liebenau administration, and in the following give a list of the official visits paid by His Majesty from August, 1888, to May, 1890, leaving out hunting-trips and others of a private character.

William went to Stockholm and Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Munich, Vienna, Rome, Hamburg, Leipzig, Breslau, Stettin, Bückeburg, Oldenburg, Wilhelmshafen, Schwedt, Weimar, Brunswick, Dresden, Osborne, Sandown Bay, Aldershot, Carlsruhe, Strassburg, Metz, Münster, Minden, Hannover, Schwerin, Athens, Dessau, Darmstadt, Worms, Bremen, Frankfurt-on-the-Main, Altenburg, Königsberg, altogether stopping and holding Court in thirty-seven different cities and towns in Germany and abroad, many of which were visited three or four times, and all within the short space of a year and ten months.

To find excuses for this almost perpetual absence from the seat of government (Count Shuvaloff, at that time Russian Ambassador in Berlin, told me the Czar—Alexander III—used to say there was only one similar case in history, that of Charles XII, "the Madman of the North;" continuing: "Wait a while, and, like Charles, he will some day send his boot to preside at the state council!" which was not half bad for an autocrat)—to quiet public opinion on the score of these incessant junketings, all sorts of excuses are invented by William and his suite, as once before mentioned; he goes away "to take a bird's-eye view of politics, and to come back unbiased by partisan preferences;" if he neglects to look up the King of the Belgians, "our African possessions may

be wiped out" even quicker than Eugene Richter wishes it; a month's sea-voyage affords the Kaiser a much-wanted "opportunity for studying his inner man," and who would deny the necessity of such an undertaking?

But the real motive that prompts these journeys is the morbid restlessness of which the Kaiser is possessed, and that scourges him, a crowned Ahasuerus, from town to city, over seas and mountains.

The Kaiser's adjutants, military and civil secretaries, or representatives of the various cabinets, body-physicians, valets, wardrobemen, keeper of the silverware, cellarer, master of the horse, coachmen, grooms, mouth-cooks, kitchen employees, and the host of chasseurs and flunkies who accompany him on each trip, are so well trained in handling the endless accessories and baggage, that an order to get ready at an hour's notice neither surprises nor rattles them. If the tour or outing on which they are about to enter has been under consideration for some time, a printed itinerary is furnished to the chief of each department, but quite frequently not one of the men is able to learn anything beyond the hour of departure.

The Kaiser, you know, addresses his attendants only in monosyllables, and does not even take the trouble to speak distinctly. To ask repetition of a sentence, or to put any question whatever, would be an unheard-of breach of etiquette, so there remains nothing to do but to take chances and work ahead in the dark, the more so, as the adjutants often know no more of His Majesty's intentions than the small stable-boys who go with every imperial party to assist at tennis.

Especial secrecy is observed if the destination is some town or fortress in the far west or east of the Empire, where, after a night of travel, the war-lord intends to mount at five or six o'clock in the morning, and, attended

by trumpeters and a formidable suite, ride through the streets alarming the garrison. If the wardrobe-master on duty suspects that the journey is on an errand of that kind, he exhausts every possible means of solving the mystery, and more than once have I aided the poor fellow by trying to learn from the Empress what was wanted. Sometimes, though, even Her Majesty is kept in ignorance.

The wardrobeman's anxiety will be better understood when I mention that William makes it a rule to always wear the uniform of the principal regiment garrisoned in the place visited; the attendant unable to draw from among the baggage the military dress desired would quickly find himself dropped from the salary list.

When, in addition, it is stated that a cavalry uniform, for instance, consists of fourteen distinct parts, the reader may gain an idea of the work involved by these sudden journeys, for one uniform would of course not do; there must be three or four in reserve, and also civilian and hunting dress.

In a similar predicament to the wardrobeman is the stable-master. Will an infantry, cavalry, or artillery horse be wanted? for His Majesty rides a different breed of animal with each body of troops. Every time information is withheld in the manner described, six horses, two of each kind, must be taken along for His Majesty, besides consignments of carriage-horses and vehicles and numerous mounts for the suite, all of which increases the cost of railway journeying enormously, for, though most of the German railways are property of the state, the Kaiser has to pay mileage like any other individual.

The imperial train generally pulls out of the station at ten o'clock at night, as the Kaiser never allows business to interfere with his own convenience, and if, for some reason or other, he wants to rise earlier than usual, he retires soon

after supper to make up for time that will be lost. Furthermore, the train must proceed at the slowest possible rate, so that the all-highest's sleep be not disturbed.

That the saloon-train is furnished with all the luxuries imaginable—a rolling palace containing reception, dining, bed, bath and toilet rooms, kitchen, scullery, and stables—need hardly be explained; the only things lacking are accommodations for the servants, who, valet and hostler alike, must sleep in chairs or on the floor.

At five o'clock, or earlier, a cup of tea is served to the monarch, the bath and toilet follow, and then breakfast, which latter is served with much more state and with a greater variety of food than at home. So fortified and refreshed, the Kaiser and his paladins mount at dawn, and, preceded by buglers, gallop into the city "to kill the soldiers' and, incidentally, the citizens' morning sleep."

One of the imperial adjutants, whom I dare not name, as it would ruin this gentleman's chances of advancement, describes the mode of procedure at the alarming of the garrison of the fortress of Posen as follows:

"During breakfast, and on our ride to the inner town, His Majesty talked of nothing but of the 'stupid faces' the commander and officers, suddenly roused from sleep, would make, and drew some rather *risqué* pictures of the consternation and discomforts bound to follow the signals, so that one of our party remarked: 'These provincial petticoats will not thank Your Majesty for making war on them.'

"'Pshaw!' said the Kaiser, 'what matters that? The devotion of my brave blue jackets, some of whom I will aid to escape without paying their bills, will recompense me for any loss of admiration in those quarters.'

"By this time we had been admitted, after giving the parole of the day," continued my informant, "and

presently our trumpeters' blasts and the sharp clang of our horses' hoofs resounded in the main street. Posen, though only half Polish, has seen so many sieges, insurrections, and kindred revolutionary doings, that warlike activity has no terror for her citizens; a *coup de main* in broad daylight would no more disconcert them, I believe, than a good-sized shower. Windows were opened and shut as we cantered along, men, women, and children in night-dresses casting hasty glances at the strange cavalcade through half-raised Venetian blinds. Now and again a military person, semi-dressed, or semi-naked if you will, drew himself up into regulation attitude, hand raised to the side of his head; one might imagine hearing his naked heels strike together. Proceeding at a rapid rate, we encountered several small troops of soldiers bound for the drill-grounds; but the Kaiser ordered them to fall behind, while their officers gave the report to the adjutants. On Wilhelm Platz the Emperor had the satisfaction of stopping two cavalry horses which, while being saddled, heard the signal and ran off to take their places in array; altogether we made an awful lot of noise and provoked more.

"Meanwhile, we had reached the principal hotel, and there, at one of the upper windows, was a well-known face, adorned by fierce blonde mustachios, peeping out between two lithe figures in white,—the one a popular *coryphée* of the Berlin Royal Opera House, the other the *ingénue* of the theatre on Gendarmen Markt.

"'What do I see?' cried the Emperor. 'This looks as if my ballet and players had preceded us to Posen.'

"'It is the first instance that these two branches of art appear on terms of *camaraderie*,' remarked Adjutant von Moltke, and everybody laughed.

"The surprised Adonis, Baron von X——, Rittmeister of the Body Hussars, was invited to the Emperor's circle

at the banquet in the officers' mess that followed the parade, and His Majesty amused himself royally at his expense, as, indeed, he treated the whole expedition as a huge joke, arranged to afford him a novel entertainment."

Travelling is such a mania with the Reise-Kaiser, that, when business of state or the fact that there is nobody or nothing to visit forbids his going abroad, he occasionally spends a night in his railway carriage, stalled at Wildpark Station, only five minutes from the Neues Palais, on the plea that on the following morning he must be in Berlin at some unearthly hour.

In the early part of the summer of 1895, he indulged in this queer pastime with increasing regularity until one night in June, when, about to drive to the station from some festivity held at the Marble Palace, the Kaiserin took courage to threaten an invasion of his bachelor quarters, which, she insisted, must possess some special attraction. As Her Majesty was not quite wrong in this, William desisted from following his inclination then and for several months, his compliance being all the more ready as the Empress was in an interesting condition. But Her Majesty's interference was not only justified, it was likewise well-timed, for just then there was under way a formidable conspiracy among the royal servants, who, underpaid as they are and nourishing a sneaking spirit of insurrection, had conspired among themselves to inform some member of the opposition (with a view of interpellating the Minister of Railways in the Reichstag) of the fact that His Majesty was in the habit of using a public depot for his sleeping apartment. In that way they expected to get even with William for compelling them to spend so many nights in their clothes. Of course, the legislative body has no business to inquire into the sovereign's manner of spending his nights, but the

The Kaiserin

public was doubtless very much interested in the accompanying circumstance that, when His Majesty chooses to repose at Wildpark Station, traffic is seriously interfered with in order that the mighty one's sleep be not disturbed.

"Over a hundred officials and workmen stay awake to-night to facilitate the Kaiser's fad for occupying his car," said Count Eulenburg to me one evening, at the end of May, when the Kaiser was setting out for his wheeled boudoir.

"Impossible!—a hundred persons?"

"A hundred or more,—the lists have gone through my hands. Reflect a moment on the work involved: Freight-trains must be side-tracked, and passenger-trains are compelled to reduce their speed, while the ordinary signals, steam-whistling and ringing of bells, have to be abandoned, and the number of employees doubled, to forestall mishaps."

If disgruntled servants had told this story to Liebknecht or Bebel, the inevitable discussion might have seriously interfered with His Majesty's enjoyment of the Wilhelm Canal opening festivities then about to take place.

CHAPTER VI

William stays at home when there is no one to visit, I said in the preceding chapter, and I may add that willing victims of imperial travelmania grow scarcer year by year. How well I remember the Kaiser's return from his first Northland trip in the summer of 1888, when he spoke most exultingly of his visit to Copenhagen, and how he had succeeded in wheedling King Christian and Queen Louise.

"They can be of great service to me with Alexander" (the Czar), he said, "and I promised to stay with them a couple of days every year on my way to or from Northland."

All of us around the royal board, officials and guests, looked at one another in astonishment, for the poverty of the reigning family of Denmark is notorious. Indeed, almost everybody at Court had heard the Kaiser, at one time or another, quote Field-marshal Count Moltke's observation in one of his famous letters to his brother Adolph:

"Poor King of Denmark! The founder of a new dynasty, he began his reign by losing one-half of the realm! Sweeping reductions were inevitable in the Court and administration; indeed, it is doubtful if this state can continue to exist as an independent kingdom."

Besides, it was an open secret that the Czar, when visiting his father-in-law, paid for his accommodation like the millionaire he was,—for his and for that of all his relatives

making Denmark their summer home and rejoicing in the annual family reunions. The Kaiser knew that; he had even obtained a corroboration of the story in Stockholm, as it turned out by and by; was he, then, determined to become one of the Czar's pensioners, or did he not care whether he embarrassed his venerable brother of Denmark, half of whose inheritance Prussia swallowed up?

Reference to the minutes of the journey reveal the fact that at the state dinner in Castle Amalienborg, the Kaiser, answering King Christian's toast, literally said: "I submit my sincerest thanks for Your Majesty's welcome, and hope that I may be permitted to visit Your Majesty frequently in the same way."

It was the last toast spoken that evening, and the members of the Kaiser's suite do not know whether the implied question was honored by an invitation in private. Certain it is, however, that His Majesty had no further occasion "to eat the Danes out of house and home," for, although the Court of Copenhagen was annually advised of His Majesty's contemplated northern trips, it always acknowledged the notification in such cold terms that any wish to follow it up by a promise to call and take pot-luck was *eo ipso* forestalled.

My mistress, in whose circle the Fredensborg family reunions were repeatedly discussed, explained her husband's continued neglect to join them by saying that the increasing volume of business made it necessary for His Majesty to pass by Copenhagen; but I have it on the authority of a high official in the Russian Embassy during Count Shuvaloff's administration, that Czar Alexander distinctly refused to be disturbed in his retreat by "that young man," while, at the same time, the Danish Minister in Berlin hinted that Queen Louise was not well enough to stand the excitement of such visits, that brought back to

her all she had suffered since the events of 1864. But that economical questions have something to do with it as well as politics, cannot be denied. The Emperor's suite, you must know, is seldom less than sixty head strong, even when he travels in semi-state. Imagine that gang, with appetites whetted by a sea-voyage, descending upon the little island Court, which, though not ashamed to exhibit its cocoanut matting in the royal corridors and its crazy little oil-lamps before the immensely wealthy Russians, must brush up and go to no end of expense to make as good a showing as possible before these shoddy Berliners. Besides, the Kaiser always expects that some military or naval display will be especially arranged for him.

But not only poor kings, like Christian, object to these imperial invasions; at Rome and Vienna, not to mention the small German courts, the cry, "The Prussians are coming!" is as sure of causing a panic in what is styled "highest circles" as in the nurseries of France, where the echo of 1870 to 1871 is still *en vogue* as a means of intimidation.

On February 21, 1895, the Kaiser returned in high dudgeon from Vienna, whither he had gone unexpectedly to attend the funeral of the late Archduke Albrecht. Albrecht had been a good hater of Prussia all his life, and if his ideas had prevailed twenty-seven years ago, Austria would have fallen foul of the Prussian rear and flank; only Moltke's incredible swiftness of mobilization queered that plan. This eventuality had been repeatedly discussed in the press, and, in view of the circumstance, Emperor Francis Joseph was loath to invite the Kaiser to the funeral. But William refused to acknowledge the tact displayed by his brother monarch. "Here," so ran his calculations as depicted in some of his remarks made before leaving,— "here is an event upon which the eyes of the world will be

riveted for a day at least,—a pompous funeral,—where one may cut an important figure as the only live war-lord; besides, many political questions call for discussion with Francis Joseph just now. Would it not be absurd to miss this opportunity for combining pleasure, pardon, spectacular display, with business?"

William rushed off to Austria pell-mell, but not without having previously instructed the overseer of the official scribes, Herr von Tausch, the same who figured in the criminal courts in 1897, to proclaim from the housetops that the German Emperor had magnanimously forgotten all about the late Archduke's evil intentions, and had gone to pay his imperial respects to the dead foe.

The first effect of this *fanfaronade* was the withdrawal from the obsequies of the dead man's brother-in-law, the Bavarian Prince Regent. Luitpold, as a near relative, had no ambition to take second rank, walking behind William. The Hofburg officials were thrown into the utmost confusion. The place of chief mourner had been reserved for Emperor Francis Joseph; now there were two sovereigns to be treated with equal distinction. So all arrangements were upset, and the Austrian monarch himself was most seriously embarrassed. However, the funeral passed off without a hitch; but William soon found that Francis Joseph, deeply chagrined at the absence of his cousin, was not in the humor to talk politics. He would neither argue the election of Faure, nor the question of the renewal of the Triple Alliance. He even refused to express an opinion on the rumors concerning Count Kalnoky's resignation, which was then imminent.

This the Emperor himself reported on coming home, blaming, at the same time, everybody but himself for the rebuffs experienced. What he did not tell (the Empress learned of it later through her brother, who had it from

the Princess Philip of Coburg) was that Francis Joseph, surely the mildest and most hospitable of men, treated the Kaiser with so much coolness that His Majesty left his apartments in the Hofburg and took up his quarters with Count Philip Eulenburg, at the German Embassy, where the object of the visit was lost sight of at an informal dinner enlivened by songs and dances which hired vaudeville stars and the ambassadorial troubadour himself performed.

And that happened a year after William had called Francis Joseph, in a speech delivered at the Austrian Navy Casino in Pola, "my best friend, with whom I am united in sincerest friendship, and who is my most loyal companion in arms." Finally, the King of Saxony had to act as peacemaker between the two Emperors.

When the news reached Berlin, in the middle of November, 1889, that Dom Pedro had been deposed, Duke Gunther of Schleswig circulated a story to the effect that the Kaiser received the information with the remark: "Too bad; I had just thought of paying him a visit." The responsibility for this anecdote I must leave to His Highness. Impossible it is not, though I doubt that Bismarck would have allowed the Emperor to go on so long a journey without appointing a regency during his absence. Most probably the Kaiser had information that Dom Pedro intended to visit Europe, and thus give him a chance to make his acquaintance. He never alluded to the matter at table or in the course of general conversation. That His Majesty, after the venerable monarch had been deposed, no longer felt any desire to see him, is quite natural with a man of William's character.

After the bustle occasioned by His Majesty's preparations for travel, life in the Neues Palais, which is never brilliant, but often spectacular, becomes duller and more insipid

than ever. Entertainments are completely abandoned, and economy is the word heard on every side. The Court and House-marshals give strict orders that expenses be cut all round; a number of the servants are shipped to Berlin, so that their board wages, to which they are entitled while in Potsdam, may be saved; only flowers from the royal gardens dare be used for decoration, while great loads are bought from different purveyors during the Kaiser's residence at home, and, finally, the expenses of the cuisine are reduced two-thirds, because the Empress, out of sheer *ennui*, falls in with the prevailing rule by taking her meals privately with the children.

All of a sudden, sometimes, His Majesty bursts anew into the midst of our humdrum existence, having left his friends abruptly, or his contemplated business unfinished; occasionally, it is said, press criticism brings him back earlier than anticipated. Hence he employs a day or so despatching the most urgent affairs of state, and immediately sets the ball of courtly entertainments rolling. He may order a dinner of a hundred covers or more for next day, and again, while that is in progress, invite his guests, or part of them, to accompany him on a yachting expedition on the Havel lakes.

Gun-charger Riger, who, in his gold-embroidered chasseur dress, stands behind the Kaiser's chair on festive occasions, often conveys a brief command of that kind to the House-marshal on duty in this fashion: "His Majesty's yacht Alexandra and so and so many auxiliary yachts must be ready at such and such an hour,"—usually at four or five, if the meal began between one and two.

To facilitate this imperial wish, telegraph, telephone, and mounted messengers must be plentifully employed in an effort to drum together officers and crew, hire vessels, and secure a band. Furthermore, the *personnel* of the

"coffee and tea kitchen and *conditorei*" (confectionery) has to be sent to the steamer with their outfit, for each of the five meals to which their Majesties are accustomed must be served punctually under all circumstances.

Promptly at the hour named, the marshal on duty "submits" that carriages are waiting to bring their Majesties and the company to the embarking-place, and, before the vessel leaves, the official takes heart to ask his master where he commands that supper shall be served.

Maybe His Majesty answers, carelessly: "Pfauen Insel," or, "Park of the Marble Palace," "at eight."

The first is a small wooded island in the Havel, containing a sparsely-furnished royal villa that affords a certain amount of space, but little else, for the accommodation of guests. The castellan of the estate or castle selected for the invasion is now hurriedly informed, and the stable-master sets about, getting ready ten or more so-called kitchen vans to transport all that is necessary: refrigerators and hot-closets, table-linen, basketfuls of silver and plate, china and crystal, wines, meats, vegetables and delicacies, lamps and candelabra, and a thousand and one accessories. All these things are under the care of certain officials and servants, and, the staff being thoroughly organized, the whole train is equipped in an incredibly short while and starts for its destination, the Court-marshal following in his carriage to superintend the arrangements on the spot (*nota bene*, if the Kaiser has not meanwhile made up his mind to go elsewhere).

Oh, the fickleness of the great! In the summers of 1895 and 1896, especially, the places of rendezvous were changed with alarming frequency, and before the cavalcade started for a certain castle or park, the men usually offered to lay wagers that upon their arrival they would find a telegram ordering supper in some other lodge or

villa, or on the borders of some lake five or ten miles to the south, or east, or west, as the case might be. Once they were chased in this manner from Charlotten Hof to the Baierische Häuschen in Wildpark, and from there to the Entenfang, far out in the royal hunting-grounds. The Entenfang is a romantic spot, such as young lovers might select for a picnic; but imagine the tumult and work which the impromptu establishment of a royal table of from twenty to one hundred covers must occasion, when the nearest castle or royal villa is ten miles off. The vans had to be sent back to the Neues Palais for tables, chairs, carpets, and a little tent for the toilet, while the nearest military post furnished field cooking-apparatus, and a dozen or more horses were driven lame travelling to and fro with heavy loads. The damage caused by broken crockery, crystal, and ruined furniture also reached a high figure.

Foreign visitors at our Court frequently wonder how it is possible for one man to give employment to three hundred and fifty horses in driving and riding, as the Emperor does. The story of these whimsical excursions explains that point, for, aside from the horses needed for the service, carriages must be sent to fetch their Majesties and suite and company from some distant place, perhaps, while others are collecting the ladies and gentlemen in Potsdam and neighborhood, or from incoming trains, who have been "commanded" to be present at supper at some place where at the time stipulated no sign of life exists.

At twelve or one o'clock in the morning, when the imperial master, his titled suite and his friends, have forgotten, in several hours' sleep, all about the forty-five minutes of entertainment that kept a small army of men, women, and beasts on the run since dinner, the vans and carry-alls return to the palace, often awakening many a

noble lord and lady who wonder that any living creature dare disturb their august slumber.

Whether they dare or not, they do. It is a way they have of getting even with "their betters."

When the Kaiser is at home, his conversation perpetually turns on the subject of future outings, and his secretaries and adjutants are kept busy scouring the papers for items that promise excuses for a visit to one place or another. As soon as an opening is discovered, the Court-marshal must find ways and means to secure an invitation for the Emperor, and to that end either the military authorities, the *Landrath* (chief of a county), or some Prince or aristocrat living in the neighborhood, receives instructions, which in many cases are most eagerly followed, for William's presence in any place, not his capital, is a guarantee for no end of advertisement; sometimes, though, it is quite difficult to persuade the municipal authorities, these worthy men being afraid of the cost of the undertaking.

If neither cities nor country districts, neither the North German Lloyd nor the Hamburg Line, neither the shipyards nor yacht or hunting clubs at home or abroad, hold out allurements, the Kaiser, quickly resolved, *makes* opportunities for travel or display.

He observes, for instance, that it is so and so many years since the —— Regiment received an honored flag. "Let's grant it a new set of colors," says William, and presently parades, religious ceremonies, speechifyings, dinners, and tattoos are in the air. Or, all regiments being provided with flags, His Majesty feels "graciously pleased" to bestow on one or another "ensign ribbons," an act yielding as much in the way of spectacular splendor as the other.

In contrast to the Empress, William is not a religious person, but, like Her Majesty, firmly believes that godliness

does very well for common people. With that idea in mind, he inaugurated his crusade for the building of churches, leaving to Auguste Victoria's initiative the task of collecting the necessary funds. For his part he is interested only in the corner-stone-laying and the opening of such edifices.

"We have built fifteen churches in Berlin alone since 1890," said William, in the course of a dinner at the Berlin Schloss, some time ago.

"His Majesty means he drove thirty times *à la* Dumont to commencement and finishing celebrations," whispered my neighbor, the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Baron von Marschall, imitating the persiflage of his South German home, where it is the fashion to refer to a bevy of ten girls as "twenty bosoms."

Provided nothing better offers itself, the Kaiser is even content to assist at church ceremonials of the sort described in the provinces; "they bore him awfully," says Baron von Lyncker, "but he finds opportunity for making a speech there, and a little newspaper notoriety is likewise sure to follow. And one must be thankful for small favors in these democratic times." That the Kaiser allows no war or other monument to be unveiled without personally participating in the act, hardly requires comment.

In a preceding paragraph, I referred to the easy complaisance with which the aristocracy submits to the Kaiser's wishes. William, indeed, seems to have cowed the flower of German nobility into a condition that once prevailed in France, when the dignitaries of the crown fought among themselves as to who should have the honor to hand His Majesty a clean shirt or remove his dirty boots. Let me give one instance for many.

On October 24, 1894, the Kaiser's "Song to Ægir" was performed at a matinée in the Royal Opera House, which

the Prince and Princess of Wied attended, together with their Majesties.

The Prince is a man in the fifties, belongs to one of the proudest families in Europe, and besides is the brother of the Queen of Roumania and an uncle of the Queen of Holland; yet every time the big audience waxed enthusiastic over His Majesty's alleged masterpiece, this old man with silvery hair rose respectfully from his seat and bowed low before his nephew, keeping up the farce all through the performance without William in any way restraining him.

And this reminds me, by way of contrast, of a conversation at which I was present some time previous to that public exhibition of senile adulation.

"Tell me, honestly, who helped His Majesty compose this frightful 'Song to Ægir?'"

"State secret. Your Royal Highness must certainly excuse me this time," and Adjutant Count Moltke looked up helplessly into the beautiful eyes of the Emperor's sister.

"As my big brother remarked the other day to the Burgomaster of Thorn: 'I can be very disagreeable if need be,' said the Princess of Meiningen. "Now, Herr Major, answer pit and pat, I command you."

"His Majesty composed the song."

"That is the official version, I know; what I am interested in, is to find out *how* he did it."

"At the piano, Your Royal Highness."

"Since when does His Majesty play?"

"He has the finest ear for music, *that* Your Royal Highness will not deny. He struck the keys with one finger, and, if you promise not to give me away, your humble servant had the honor of putting the all-highest's composition on paper."

"Thanks, awfully," said the Princess, and, turning to her lady-in-waiting, Fräulein von Ramin, now Madame von Brochen, she added: "Not a word of this to anybody; our dear Moltke must not be punished for amusing us." And, once more addressing the adjutant, she continued with her usual mocking laugh: "I will now tell you how it was done, you innocent. The Emperor was strumming the piano with one finger, when a certain blonde giant about your size stepped behind him, and, striking the keys, gave life to a musical composition he, the giant, had half perfected in his head. The air pleased His Majesty, and he added a note here and there. And, as the thing progressed, my big brother said: 'This would be an excellent accompaniment to Eulenburg's northern legend. Call him at once.' When the troubadour appeared, all three of you set to work on this frightful piece of clap-trap, and, as you correctly reported, the honor of putting the composition on paper fell to you as the only capable musician of the trio,—*the* composition, I said, not the all-highest one."

This lively colloquy occurred a few days after the much-disputed air had been performed at a concert in honor of a deputation from the British Royal Dragoons visiting Berlin to congratulate their new chief, the Kaiser, and it gives the true story of the birth of that song. For the orchestration, it may be added, Professor Albert Becker, of Berlin, is responsible; he received the Hohenzollern Cross in acknowledgment.

Besides clearing up the "Ægir" mystery, the above affords an interesting illustration of William's mode of work. He has talents, undoubtedly, but they are creative only in giving work to others, the product passing for his own in the end. As Herren von Moltke and Philip Eulenburg are the real authors of "his" "Song to Ægir," so Professor Knackfuss, in Cassel, composes his cartoons,

though being credited only with their technical execution. The late Court chaplain Frommel used to write the imperial sermons delivered with so much éclat on the deck of the yacht Hohenzollern; officers of the military household prepare William's lectures, and the artist Karl Saltzmann paints his landscapes and marine views.

To shield their master from the accusation of frittering away his time in useless dilettanteism, the German official press occasionally prints historic reviews purporting to show that the Hohenzollerns of all ages have been among the most gifted of mortals,—authors, poets, musicians, artists. Especially to Frederick William the First's cleverness as a painter, constant reference is made, although any one acquainted with the history of the Prussian Court might be aware of the untenableness of that claim. This gentleman, the father of the great Frederick, wrote his royal signature upon a good many canvases, it is true, but few of the pictures attributed to his brush were really his. As a matter of fact, instead of being the Apelles of the Brandenburg dynasty, its first noted painter, he started the fashion of counterfeiting, of which his son became past-master. His scheme was to employ poor artists by the year, and to let them paint daubs of all sizes and subjects. These he adorned with his name, adding a little coloring here and there into the bargain, and sold at high prices to flatterers and enemies, as the case might be, for in those days the modes of punishment at the disposal of a Majesty were manifold and curious.

A cunning knave this second King of Prussia, and his august example was not entirely lost upon his successors, as the case under consideration shows. But, in weighing the plentiful boasts of imperial achievements upon the scale of sober judgment, there is still another point to be noticed: William's daily programme—I remind the reader of Count

Seckendorf's witty delineation of His Majesty's labors hour by hour—precludes in itself the undertaking of any great amount of serious work on the Kaiser's part. Having forever one foot in the stirrup and planning new diversions before another is fairly under way, how should this alleged jack-of-all-trades find time for the literary, musical, and artistic pursuits credited to him? There are geniuses who accomplish a prodigious amount of work by turning night into day; but, with all my experience in the royal household, I am at a loss to account for the newspaper statements setting forth that now and again the Kaiser spends half, or three-quarters of the night, studying state papers or working out great projects in the interest of public concern.

In the first place, his constitutional aversion to sitting still for a considerable time is against night-work, even supposing, for argument's sake, that the day's or evening's amusements did not tire out the Kaiser so completely as to make it impossible for him to give the necessary attention to important business; moreover, his love of sleep would stand in the way. After supper, or at the conclusion of the night's entertainment, the Kaiser invariably retires as speedily as possible, for "*Morgen wieder lustick*," thinks His Majesty, with Jerome, the late King of Westphalia. And to persevere in a round of pleasures and excitement it is essential to husband one's strength.

Many will disagree with the statements made, I know. Having heard so much to the contrary, people are naturally disinclined to have their ideas upset. Still, to defend myself against accusations of inaccuracy or exaggeration, I need but quote certain notes from my diary covering the period from August, 1893, to August, 1894.

Of the three hundred and sixty-five days, the Kaiser spent away from his official residence one hundred and

The Kaiser at the Military Manoeuvres

ninety-nine, devoting himself to the army on twenty-seven days, and employing sixteen days in duties of representation. One hundred and fifty-six days were consumed by hunting-trips, sea-journeys, and visiting.

Now to the one hundred and sixty-six days when His Majesty was "officially" at home. Seventy-seven of them were pleasantly passed in shooting, boating, yachting, or other out-door exercise in the neighborhood of Potsdam or Berlin, while of the remaining eighty-nine days, each twenty-four hours were diversified by banquets, corsos, concerts, theatrical performances; by receptions, reviews, or speech-makings. The number of miles covered by the Kaiser either in his saloon-carriage or on board ship during the period mentioned, amounted to three-quarters of the earth's circumference.

A dozen members of our Court society were discussing the above facts, furnished to settle a bet between Princess Frederick Leopold and her brother, Duke Günther, at a musicale given by the widow of the Red Prince in her palace on Leipziger Platz, when Princess Aribert of Anhalt, a sprightly young Englishwoman, remarked: "Granted His Majesty cannot ply the fourteen trades and arts imputed by some historians to Peter the Great, no one will gainsay that he is a brilliant speaker and an adept in military science."

"Of his rhetorical qualities," replied our graceful hostess, who at that time had special reasons for quarrelling with her grandnephew, "foreigners, even those understanding German as well as you, my dear, can hardly form a proper estimate. For myself, I think the Kaiser's speeches neither distinguished for elegance of diction nor for originality. The most offensive sameness pervades them, and not infrequently they abound in misstatements."

I could have furnished Her Royal Highness at least one very good reason for the faults pointed out: these speeches are of the Kaiser's own making.

Only very rarely will His Majesty take the trouble to jot down minutes, as he did with the address to the recruits mentioned in another chapter, and even then it is done more to assist memory in following out a certain line of thought, than to retain dates and figures. Moreover, I doubt that he thinks it necessary to do so. A person who, relying merely upon his musical ear, and without having had instruction in singing, or being able to play an instrument, gets up in a stately gathering to sing a ballad abounding in difficult passages, is certainly the quintessence of self-reliance.

And that is exactly what William did at Castle Schlitz, in May, 1894, with Count Goertz as accompanist, the boldness of the exploit before an audience distinguished for artistic accomplishments being none the less pronounced on account of the fact that the air was alleged to be his own composition.

Of the performance, Countess Goertz spoke to the Empress in most enthusiastic terms; but, to quote William, "Her Ladyship is a woman so beautiful that to expect sense from her would be hoggish."

That on the same occasion His Majesty acquitted himself quite well as *Kapellmeister*, conducting the band, a military one, which had been thoroughly drilled in performing the "Song to Ægir," is not astonishing. With his ear for music and a little attention to technique, it would have been difficult, indeed, to lead so finished an organization into blunders when every man knew that his slightest mistake would be followed by professional disgrace.

Some months after the exploit in Schlitz, His Majesty and a great number of friends were hunting near Castle

Letzlingen, the band of the Saltzwedel Lancers furnishing the table-music. At that time, the official papers reported: "the Kaiser again proved his eminent musical talent by conducting the grand march from 'Aida.'" One of the party, General von Haenisch, however, tells me that this is not true. The Kaiser took up the baton to lead the "Hohenfriedberger" and Count Moltke's "Rider's March," compositions of quite a different calibre to Verdi's great work, and which, besides, the band could have played in the dark and with eyes closed.

Much as one might be inclined to look upon this sort of coxcombry as a harmless affectation liable to wear off in the course of time, its real purport is too glaring to be overlooked; this parading with plumes borrowed and stolen the many bids for popular applause through newspaper adulation smacking of the methods of the press agent, William's public lecturing and preaching, his coquetting with the stage and letters,—all is but part of a system carefully pieced together to uphold the pretence of imperial omnipotence and omniknowledge.

"As to the Socialists, leave them to me; that's what I told Bismarck a dozen times," said the Kaiser at supper on May 14, 1889, after the famous audience granted by him to a party of strikers; "I will settle them single-handed." And more than eight years later, toward the end of July, 1897, when he was on his way home from Norway, he kept the wires hot for three days, demanding Miquel, Prince Hohenlohe, and other friends to arrange for him a meeting with Bismarck, that he might ask the ex-Chancellor's advice concerning the re-introduction of the old Bismarckian Socialistic laws, which the government allowed to pass out of existence after the first Chancellor's dismissal. And as in 1889 and 1890 the whole palace was moved to sympathize with the poor laboring

man, who needed enlightenment and justice such as William alone knew how to provide and administer (perish the thought that the Iron Chancellor ever possessed the slightest aptitude for dealing with the labor question!), so we were recently drilled to return to the abandoned maxims and help the Kaiser eat his own words,—a practice he indulges in so frequently that I think his memory is becoming defective, as otherwise his inordinate vanity would never permit him to acknowledge defeat.

To return to the observations of Princess Frederick Charles. There is, among the numberless speeches and sayings reported of the Kaiser, not one pithy remark that has become a by-word in every-day speech or in letters. In all this dreary wilderness of imperial verbosity, we find no *mot* that outlived the hour of its birth, and the Kaiser's observations, as a general thing, are too commonplace and insignificant even to permit dressing up. Other important persons are *made* to say clever things, often without their knowledge or consent, but William's friends and admirers scour his speeches vainly for a peg upon which to hang some witticism, or some flash of genius that might eventually be credited to the royal tattler. The Emperor, who claims to be a student of the older French literature, probably got far enough in Rivarol to learn that "it is an immense advantage to have never said anything." The sentence following, namely: "but one should not abuse it," he must have overlooked, for he certainly *does* abuse the privilege. And in a twofold manner too: he keeps on saying nothing, and misquotes history at the same time. I have not kept a minute account of the missives, but, if memory serves me right, I should say that fully one-third of the mysterious anonymous letters that caused the great Court scandal of which

I will speak presently, contained caustic references to the Kaiser's assassination of historical facts.

So was, during the Christmas season of 1894, Her Majesty's holiday humor seriously disturbed by an epistle hauling the Kaiser over the coals for a speech he had made in Kiel, at the swearing-in of recruits, and which referred to the battle of Vercella (101 B.C.) as having been fought "between Germans and Romans" (mistake No. 1), and wherein "the Romans were vanquished" (mistake No. 2) "by the enemy's superior valor" (mistake No. 3).

After pointing out half a dozen other errors, the writer of the anonymous note, doubtless a woman, suggested that Auguste Victoria buy her husband a small reference-library; at the same time the correspondent thanked "William-the-Sudden" for having garbled history in order to pay homage to the arms of ancient France, "for," said this writer, "the barbaric tribe which opposed the Romans at Vercella were not Germans, but Cimbri, or Gauls; that is, they belonged to the same family as the French of to-day." Similar anonymous notes addressed to Her Majesty emptied the vials of sarcasm over the composer of the "Song to Ægir," which latter, it was pointed out, was not a god of the sea, but a miserable landlubber, who never had so much as a sniff of the ocean.

The Empress used to turn over these epistles to her husband, with an aching heart; but if Her Majesty, like most of her friends, hoped that these missives would make William more careful in the future, her expectations were not realized, for the Kaiser goes bravely on blundering and exposing himself to ridicule. So he improvised, at the unveiling of the Kaiser Wilhelm monument in Cologne, in July, 1897, an appeal for the enlargement of the navy, taking his text from "the figure of the ancient sea-god Ægir embellishing a medallion at the foot of this proud statue."

It happened, however, that the image referred to did not represent Ægir, but "Father Rhine," who resembles his heathen colleague in everything save the bunches of grapes that rest upon his locks. Of course, in the universal hilarity provoked by this *quid pro quo*, the Emperor's appeal went for naught.

That young English Princess whom we met in the palace on Leipziger Platz brought up the question of the Kaiser's singular adeptness for the military, with a vengeance. It is in bad taste to speak of the delinquent in the hangman's house. The widow of the Red Prince, greatest of Hohenzollern strategists since the Seven Years' War, did not cite this truism to her young relative; but the list of military blunders she proceeded to lay at the war-lord's door proved that she had the proverb in mind.

"Field-marshal Count Blumenthal," she said, "who, as chief of the Crown Prince's staff in the wars of 1866 and 1870, plucked the laurels that made the Kaiser's father appear almost as great a general as my own husband,—Blumenthal used to complain that he was ever obliged to prod Frederick to action. In war, the man of ripe and ready judgment is the most successful; but the late Emperor was slow at thinking, and even more dilatory when he came to act.

"With his son (William II), just the opposite holds good. If that young man has ever been able to resist a sudden impulse to any deed, no one in or out of his family has heard of it. Some years ago he made his wife chief of the Pasewalk cuirassiers, and designed a uniform for her. As proprietress of this crack regiment, Auguste Victoria is entitled to the insignia of a general; but the Emperor, unthinking as he is, bestowed upon her lieutenant's epaulettes. Think of it,—a lieutenant leading a regiment before the war-lord in parade, a lieutenant presiding at the

state banquets in the officers' mess! On another occasion, when the Russian craze had hold of him, he issued an order compelling the officers of the General Staff to attend desk-work in riding-boots. They did so for a day or two; but, finding it impossible to continue their studies in this heavy accoutrement, combined among themselves to disobey the command and resume ordinary foot-gear.

"But the most thoughtless of all his military blunders was his cabinet order creating Your Highness's grandmother" (and the old Princess bowed with a mock courtesy toward the Englishwoman), "Queen Victoria, Chief of the First Dragoons."

"Young Mrs. Aribert," as Louise of Anhalt is familiarly called at Court, started up, and seemed to be struggling for words.

"Tut, tut!" appeased Her Royal Highness the little firebrand, placing one hand on Louise's knee, "no disrespect to Her Majesty, I assure you. The stupidity was all on my grandnephew's part. He named the First Dragoons 'Queen of England Dragoons' just one hundred and eighty-two years, less two months and twenty-nine days, after the union between England and Scotland went into effect and the realm became officially known as Great Britain."

Everybody in the room sat speechless for a while, until Princess Aribert said, half-pleadingly: "But, dear aunt, the change in the nomenclature that eventually had to be made caused no great havoc, I trust."

"Oh, no!" replied the Princess, "His Majesty did not suffer the least inconvenience on account of that error; but the nation who had to pay double for the initials attached to the shoulder-straps and on the helmets doubtless felt greatly edified by the blunder, and so did the officers who for similar reasons were several thousand marks out of pocket."

CHAPTER VII

Both Majesties, as mentioned in a previous chapter, being indifferent talkers, after-dinner entertainments at the Prussian Court are not of a very lofty sort; indeed, I am not stretching the point when I say that *ennui* begins to hang heavily upon all present in the gilded *salons* as soon as the coffee is brought in, unless the Kaiser happens to lecture, or chooses to exhaust his stock of humorous remarks; in that event it becomes every one's duty to appear, at least, interested and edified.

To diversify things a bit, we frequently arrange "rebus competitions," a form of amusement in which the simple-minded Empress takes great delight, while the Kaiser, who not only tolerates the "twin sister of charade" in his own house, but has introduced the game into the army officers' casinos, takes active part in the sport either for the purpose of drawing attention to some smart idea that has entered his head, or merely for the sake of hearing himself talk.

Whether, as Princess Charlotte suspects, it was owing to the fact that she is known to "hate rebuses," or whether it was intended as a tribute to her fame as a wit, I do not know; but the future Duchess of Meiningen was, until quite recently, forced to contribute more often to the

pictorial pastime of the Court than any other member of the royal family or the household.

Now it happened, at an evening reception at the Berlin Schloss, in the winter of 1896, that Her Highness was called away from an animated conversation she was carrying on with half a dozen young officers. She responded languidly and with ill-grace, and, turning to me, whispered:

"I will teach them a lesson to-night. Their Majesties ought to know better than to draw me into any such sewing-society frolic. Ah, yes," she added, changing her tone, "I came prepared for the ordeal, but had no idea that the audience would include His Majesty. I warn you, brother, that one of your wondrous ideals may be shattered, if you insist upon the exploitation of my poor riddle."

"Never mind, Lottchen, if you amuse us, all shall be forgiven."

"Then send for the copy of the *Journal Amusant* which I saw on your desk."

The lively boulevard sheet which contained a grotesque review of the *salon* was brought in, together with a number of scissors that had likewise been ordered, and Her Royal Highness instructed several of her uniformed friends to cut out certain pictures, which she pasted on a sheet of white paper, adding one or two pencil sketches with her own hand.

"Here we have the enigmatical representation of one of the most interesting figures in history," she began, in the voice of an auctioneer. "You all know the person. One of our greatest poets has immortalized the subject in a stirring drama, while the figures in the rebus are all taken from the epitaph erected to the person's memory by a fine English wit."

Their Majesties, the Princesses and Princes, and all the lords and ladies crowded around the table, greeting Her Royal Highness's words with rounds of applause.

"But what do these caricatures stand for?" asked the Kaiserin, inclining her fair head toward the array of printed and hand-drawn images.

"At Your Majesty's command," courtesied Princess Charlotte, and, taking up her fan, the sprightly young woman pointed out each figure, labelling them in succession as follows: "Here we have a man-at-arms or woman-at-arms (who would know the difference?); secondly, the image of a saint; thirdly, that of a witch; fourthly, that of a lusty young fellow; fifthly, that of a sweet maiden; sixthly, that of a harlot; No. 7, the periwig of a judge, indicating the law; No. 8, the emblem of the Republic; No. 9, the Archangel Gabriel alarming the garrisons of the world on judgment-day."

Everybody set to guessing, and everybody was highly astonished when, in the end, a correct answer not forthcoming, Her Royal Highness announced the solution of the rebus: Joan of Arc.

"Clever, very clever!" cried the Emperor; "it is a fact that the sex of the reputed heroine has been in doubt."

"I have read somewhere that this virgin was blessed with several children," remarked the Duke of Schleswig, dryly.

"But what has this type of a *cocotte* to do with the story?" And Her Majesty indicated one of the *Journal Amusant* sketches.

"If you will let me quote an epitaph from 'Historical Rarities,' to which I alluded, the connection will become clear at once."

"Provided it is not too, too ——" lisped the Empress, who dreads her sister-in-law's devil-may-care spirits; but the Kaiser, anxious to hear the rest, told Lottchen to proceed, which she did with evident relish. These were the lines quoted:

> "Here lies *Joan* of *Arc;* the which
> Some count *saint*, and some count witch;
> Some count *man*, and something *more;*
> Some count *maid*, and some a *whore;*
> Her *life's* in question, wrong or right;
> Her *death's* in doubt by laws or might.
> Oh, innocence! take heed of it,
> How thou, too, near to guilt doth sit.
> (Meantime, *France* a wonder saw:
> A woman rule, 'gainst Salic law!)
> But, reader, be content to stay
> Thy censure till the judgment-day;
> Then shalt thou know, and not before,
> Whether *saint*, *witch*, *man*, *maid*, or *whore*."

His Majesty never proposed the game at his own house after this, at least not when the Princess of Meiningen was in the party.

"We must draw the line somewhere; she demoralizes our young officers," says the Empress. And "I don't care if I do; virtue in a soldier is a word void of sense," is Princess Charlotte's merry rejoinder.

Countess Wartensleben, a descendant of the lady of that name who became famous as *maîtresse en titre* of the first King of Prussia after the latter's impotency had been a subject of diplomatic correspondence for some time—Countess Wartensleben tells me another rebus story in which the Emperor figured.

It appears that His Majesty, at the conclusion of a banquet arranged in his honor by the officers of the Body

Cuirassiers, in Breslau (September 11, 1890), proposed his favorite means for killing time, and forthwith constructed the following rebus:

It was too deep for the "talent" present,—some fifty or sixty officers,—and finally the Emperor condescended to explain the mystery.

"Why, it means: Verdict by Emperor William" (the joke hinges upon the similarity of the German words *Uhrtheil*, that is, part of a clock, viz., the pendulum, and *Urtheil*, viz., verdict).

All applauded wildly, all except one; instead of admiration, the handsome features of Rittmeister Count Wartensleben exhibited traces of a sneer.

"You have a different solution, Count," exclaimed William; "I see it in your face."

"I had one in mind, Your Majesty; but, after the Kaiser has spoken, my poor explanation cannot be of the least account."

"Still, I must have it. Speak up."

"I beg Your Majesty to absolve me from that duty."

"I command you to proceed."

Wartensleben bit his lips. "As Your Majesty knows, I am a Mecklenburger," he said; "I learned my Fritz

Reuter by heart. The rebus reminds me of a passage in 'Durchleuchting,'—'He goes this way, he goes that way.'"

Ominous silence fell upon the assemblage after this blunt speech. "My husband said that you could hear the Colonel shake in his boots," reported Madame von Wartensleben when she described the scene to me. Luckily, the Kaiser chose to treat the matter as a joke. "If that is to be an allusion to my title of Reise-Kaiser, yours is not a bad idea," he said, gathered up his drawing and threw it under the table.

"He goes this way, he goes that way,"—an animated pendulum swinging freely under the action of a mind that rambles more or less incoherently from one topic to another, its ideas overthrowing each other,—this Wartensleben (or his Reuter) has a clearer notion of the Kaiser's character than all the rest of his critics.

Princess Frederick Charles's caustic remarks, quoted in another chapter, have acquainted us with some of the more serious consequences of William's bridleless impetuosity; here follow some examples of less importance, that, at the same time, are more pleasant to contemplate.

In the middle of February, 1892, when the Kaiser held Court in the Berlin Schloss, as usual in winter, I was about to read the newspapers to Her Majesty one fine morning when, unfolding the parcel of our daily literary allowance, I came across a copy of the *Berliner Kleines Journal*,—organ of *ces dames*, that, of course, is strictly tabooed in the imperial apartments; somebody had smuggled this sheet into Auguste Victoria's sanctum doubtless for a well-defined purpose. Among the society notes was a marked paragraph, which at once attracted Her Majesty's attention, and she ordered me to read it before I had time to ascertain its contents.

It turned out to be a story connecting the name of the Emperor's adjutant, Herr von Huelsen, with that of the only daughter of General von Lucadou as a matrimonial possibility.

"Incredible!" cried the Empress; "Herr von Huelsen may be a Count some day, and that young woman's mother is descended from a French tailor's family."

"A very rich tailor's, though," suggested Fräulein von Gersdorff.

"Very likely," said the Empress, somewhat piqued, "considering the prices these Paris *modistes* charge." Then, turning to me, Her Majesty continued: "Be good enough to take the paper to His Majesty's study, and place it on his desk, so he may find it upon his return. This scandal must be nipped in the bud."

When I reached the imperial antechamber, the Kaiser had just come in from parade, and, observing the paper I had in my hand, inquired, in his customary impulsive style, what it meant?

"My all-highest mistress desired me to put the *Kleines Journal* upon Your Majesty's desk. It contains a reference to Herr von Huelsen."

"To Huelsen? Let me see." After reading the first line or two, he turned to the chasseur, who was standing at the door waiting to relieve him of his riding-boots and heavy sabre. "Fetch Adjutant von Huelsen at once."

I was about to withdraw, but the Emperor stopped me. "Come into my room for a moment," he said, in his most gracious style. "You shall be present during Huelsen's examination, and then report to Her Majesty."

The Kaiser sat down upon the sofa, and studied the paragraph word for word. Presently, Major von Huelsen came to ascertain the master's pleasure.

"Why don't you marry Fräulein von Lucadou?" said the Kaiser, looking up from the paper with a smile that expressed good-natured surprise. "You have good uses for her money, I should reckon, and in this case I promise to say, with my ancient colleague *'Non olet.'* "

"Begging Your Majesty's pardon, I cannot marry that young lady."

"And why not, if I approve of the match?"

Von Huelsen reddened as he answered, with a side glance at me: "Her mother is up in arms against me; Your Majesty remembers that little affair with the actress Meyer?"

"I do, of course; but the old woman must not raise objections on that account, which gave my Body Hussars a most dashing private. Tell me, honestly, do you want the girl?"

"Your Majesty," said the Major, with spirit, "I would marry a negress if my Emperor approved of it."

"That white slave shall be in your arms this very day, my word on it." And, addressing me, his Majesty continued: "Pray, Countess, inform Her Majesty that everything has been arranged satisfactorily, and that she must prepare for an early wedding banquet in Bellevue Strasse."

Twenty minutes later the Kaiser ascended the stairs leading to General von Lucadou's *bel étage*, his chasseur, carrying a beautiful bouquet of white roses, following.

As it happened, Fräulein von Lucadou was celebrating her birthday and the splendid residence was *en fête;* but, preparations for an influx of guests notwithstanding, the Emperor's unannounced visit threw the big household into confusion,—a condition most favorable to His Majesty's purpose. To begin with, he congratulated Fräulein von Lucadou before the assembled guests on her betrothal to his adjutant, and then drew the "*Generalin*" into a

corner to extol to her the afterwise virtues of her future son-in-law.

"But," gasped the old lady, in whose bosom pride and anger fought for supremacy, "our daughter has not my consent. In fact, Your Majesty's congratulations are based upon a false presumption. Even the General has not seriously considered Herr von Huelsen's wooing."

"Pshaw! the General will obey orders every time," bristled up His Majesty; "and as for you, *gnädige Frau*, I hope you will waive your objections when I tell you that Huelsen is just the man for your daughter."

Of course, Madame von Lucadou had to give in, and soon afterward the wedding was celebrated with great pomp, the Kaiser and Kaiserin, by their presence, lending additional splendor to the ceremonies and the banquet.

In this case, as in most other unimportant issues, where the fascination of the imperial name holds good, or where an "all-highest command," addressed to official or semi-official persons, is law, the Kaiser gained his point, and for weeks afterward spoke exultingly of his "taming of the shrew," for as such, Madame *la Générale* has a well-deserved reputation. As for Herr von Huelsen, though the Emperor's interference gained him a rich and handsome wife, his troubles had only begun. His mother-in-law *née* Sehstern-Pauli, with whom the Lucadou fortune originated, gave to the young couple a beautiful residence adjoining her own palace, furnishing it magnificently; but as, at the same time, she insisted upon staying with her daughter from early morning till late at night, this splendid home soon resembled a very warm place in Herr von Huelsen's eyes,—the "hottest on or under the earth," he assured me in a burst of confidence.

"Tell the Kaiser of the wretchedness his *Schadchen*-industry carried in its wake,—he must take pity on his favorite," I advised the disconsolate Benedict.

"Not for a million, Your Ladyship; he is capable of driving *stante pede* to Bellevue Strasse to demand an explanation."

However, the story of poor von Huelsen's sorrows finally reached the Emperor's ears, and he sent his adjutant to Vienna as military plenipotentiary after first conferring upon him the title and name of Count Haeseler, which had become extinct by the death of the adjutant's maternal grandfather, the last of the noble house.

A great many diplomatic appointments are made in that fashion under William II, as will be shown in the chapter devoted to the Kaiser and his personal friends. A whim, a word, a woman that is not even "well born," according to ultra-German notions,—these three W's suffice to raise anybody, though he may be a nobody, to a position of international importance in the German Empire of to-day.

Not long ago I was reading to their Majesties from the collection of letters which the Duchess of Orleans, Princess Palatine, addressed to Queen Charlotte of Prussia at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and to which I alluded in a previous chapter.

"I know of many great events that historians have attributed to policy or ambition, but which originated from most insignificant trifles," said the confidante of Louis XIV in one of her long, gossipy epistles. "Louis, for instance, retired from the present war against Holland solely for the purpose of returning to that old *Zottel* (demi-rep) of a Montespan and to pursue once more his nightly revels in her foul embraces."

The Empress shuddered, and told me never again to read from "Madame's" letters at random, as I had been doing under orders previously given; "Herr von der Knesebeck will make extracts and selections from the Duchess's

writings for future use," she said, beaming sweetly on the pious chamberlain.

"I cannot conceive your object in wishing for an abridged edition of these letters," remarked the Kaiser, who seemed to be annoyed at the idea; "the Duchess had certainly the grand airs of one born in the purple, though her language is that of the period,—blunt, even coarse at times. Still, with all that, her letters must be read in their entirety. A God-fearing censor, such as your Knesebeck here, would probably have eliminated the passage we just heard, though it is one of the grandest and most characteristic in her hundred or more letters in the Potsdam and Charlottenburg archives.

"The Duchess takes pains to show that the morals of the French Court are distasteful to her; she rails against the King's mistress, she even seems to deplore the abrupt ending of the hostilities, but has not one word of criticism for the King's Majesty. Reverently and silently she acquiesces in the all-highest decision: the King pleased to do a certain thing, therefore it behooves the subject to submit to his will in silence. That is as it should be. This one paragraph is worth whole volumes of theoretical teachings on the doctrine of Kingship by the grace of God. If its general contents did not make it unfit for such use, I would have it inserted in all the Readers and similar school-books."

The Menzel festival in Sans Souci (June, 1895) was likewise arranged by the Kaiser on the spur of the moment. During a conversation dealing with the artist's forthcoming eightieth birthday, somebody had remarked upon the treatment Menzel suffered at the hands of Frederick William IV's Court-marshal, the late Count Keller, who did not even deign to answer his request when Menzel asked to be allowed to see Frederick the Great's historical Music Room

by candle-light previous to putting the finishing-touches to his celebrated painting, "The Flute Concert at Sans Souci."

"Maybe he was frightened at the prospect of furnishing a couple of dozen wax candles," sneered the Duke of Schleswig.

"More likely he knew nothing of Menzel's growing reputation," suggested Vegas, the sculptor.

The Emperor overheard the last words, and joined Her Majesty, who was holding *petit cercle* in the *Tassen Zimmer*.

"Are you prepared to say that my granduncle's chief marshal failed to recognize the genius of the foremost Hohenzollern painter?" he asked, sharply.

"I would not like to libel a dead man," answered Vegas, "but appearances are certainly against the Count. I have it from Menzel's own lips that the Court-marshal refused him all and every assistance when he was painting his scenes of life in Sans Souci. The rooms of the chateau were accessible to him only to the same extent as to any other paying visitor or the hordes of foreign tourists, and he had to make his sketches piecemeal, gathering corroborative and additional material in museums and picture-galleries."

Quick as a flash the Kaiser turned to Count Eulenburg. "I shall repay the debt Prussia owes to Menzel," he spoke, not without declamatory effort. "We will have the representation of the Sans Souci flute concert three days hence. Your programme is to be ready to-morrow morning at ten. Menzel, mind you, must know nothing of this; merely command him to attend us at the Schloss at supper and a musical evening." And, turning round, he said to Her Majesty: "You will impersonate Princess Amalia, and you, Kessel" (Adjutant von Kessel, then

Commander of the First Guards), "engage all your tallest and best-looking officers to enact the great King's military household."

Again the Kaiser addressed Count Eulenburg: "Be sure to have the best artists of the Royal Orchestra perform Frederick the Great's compositions, and let Joachim be engaged for the occasion." Saying this, he took Her Majesty's arm, and, bidding his guests and the Court a hasty good-night, strode out of the apartment.

Count Eulenburg had scarcely opened his mouth to pronounce the usual phrase: "Ladies and gentlemen, their Majesties have no further commands for you to-night," when Countess Brockdorff and myself were summoned to the Kaiserin's dressing-room. Her Majesty was pacing the floor. "Help me think!" she cried; "where shall I get a costume in so short a time? Even if we telegraph to Vienna this very hour, the dress could not be finished and reach here in due season."

I found it difficult to remain patient with my mistress. "As the miller pointed out to Frederick the Great, that there is a Chancellor's Court in Berlin, so I might suggest to Your Imperial Majesty that the capital affords some very respectable costumers, and that the satin and velvet necessary for the over and under dress can be procured at any shop Unter den Linden," I remarked.

"Her Ladyship is right," said Countess Brockdorff, "but"—this malicious woman would sooner think of flying than praise somebody without a "but" to offset her own note of approval—"but, as you know, the Kaiser desires Her Majesty to represent a historical personage noted for her fondness of silver and gold embroidery. The underdress and the train of the costume must be richly ornamented. How will you accomplish this in so short a time?"

"With Her Majesty's permission," I answered, "I will once more cite an example from Prussian history. When the victorious King ordered the ceremony of swearing allegiance in Breslau at twelve hours' notice, the only cloth of state on hand for covering the throne and canopy was of the Austrian variety; that is, sprinkled with two-headed eagles. 'Never mind,' said the King, 'cut out one head and the Prussian bird of prey is ready.' So we might overhaul Her Majesty's chests of laces and precious embroideries and, I am sure, obtain material enough for a dozen costumes, and—without cutting off anybody's head," I could not constrain myself to add.

My advice was followed on the spot, and the Kaiserin personally accompanied Countess Brockdorff and myself to the wardrobe-rooms, while next morning, by the earliest train, the grand-mistress and Frau Gleim repaired to Berlin to continue the investigation in the Schloss. On the evening of the *fête* day, the Empress herself admitted that my overconfidence had been justified by the results attained.

To tell the truth, Auguste Victoria never looked better than in the picturesque costume of the royal Abbess of Quedlinburg, though she is really the last person in the world resembling Amalia, who, at the period depicted, "was as beautiful as an angel, and the most joyous and affable King's daughter ever described in old patrician literature." Her Majesty's dress consisted of a petticoat of sea-green satin, richly ornamented with silver lace of antique pattern, and an overdress of dark velvet embroidered with gold and set with precious stones. On her powdered hair, amplified by one of Herr Adeljana, the Vienna coiffeur's, most successful "creations," sat a jaunty three-cornered hat, having a blazing aigrette of large diamonds in front, the identical cluster of white stones which figured at the great Napoleon's coronation, and which he

lost, together with his entire equipage, in the battle of Waterloo.

In her ears Her Majesty wore pearl ornaments representing a small bunch of cherries. Like the aigrette, they are Crown property, and that Auguste Victoria thought well enough of the jewels to rescue them from oblivion for this occasion was certainly most appropriate.

Make a note of it, thou *fin-de-siècle* reader, historic romance is not dead, as some of our novelists would fain make us believe; that graceful offspring of love and lore merely slumbers in a moth-proof cedar chest, and, on rare occasions, steps gaily forward to recall to the minds of the initiated memories of ancient splendor.

Know, then, that those priceless gems in Her Majesty's ears belonged at one time to the great Frederick's lovely mistress, La Barbarina, as Rosalba Carriera's famous pastel of the dancer in the Dresden gallery, and furthermore a large painting which hung for nearly a century and a half in a privy of the gray Schloss on the Spree, prove. According to an old-time inventory, the canvas had been placed in that unseemly environment by all-highest order, to "the *Frauenzimmer's* lasting shame," when, in 1748, King and ballerina quarrelled. And that despicable mode of punishment, worthy of a century that tolerated the most loathsome personal uncleanliness while striving for artistic perfection, remained in force until the Schloss was partly rebuilt by the present Kaiser. The canvas, a work of Vanloo, is now stored with a lot of rubbish in Castle Bellevue, in the Thiergarten.

Barbarina's jewels in the Prussian Crown treasury! How they got there would certainly be a most interesting question to solve. Was it the warrior-Leander's "good pleasure" to tie a string to his presents, or did Barbarina share the fate of Voltaire after dismissal, and was overtaken

on the road to the frontier by Prussian hussars (as the French philosopher was on his way to Switzerland) and robbed of the negotiable souvenirs of royal favor?

The Kaiser himself came to inspect our masquerade before we entered upon our short drive to Sans Souci. All the ladies wore costumes resembling that of Her Majesty,—flowered silk petticoats, velvet overdresses puffed up at the hips, colored silk stockings, and satin slippers with high, red heels *à la* Duval and silver buckles; also towering coiffures set off by ostrich-tips. In this fetching dress, Lady of the Court, Countess von Bassewitz, looked so uncommonly well that the Kaiser, who is not used to such surprises in his wife's *entourage*, let his eyes rest upon her graceful figure and pretty face for quite a while, until Her Majesty impatiently proposed a hurried departure.

The Kaiser wore the cuirassier uniform of the great Frederick's period, a highly-ornamental dress that suited the war-lord, who was painted and powdered to perfection, extremely well, especially as Wellington boots, a very becoming wig, and his strange head-gear really and seemingly added to his figure, while his usually stern face beamed pleasantly under the powder and rouge, laid on by expert hands.

At the grand portals of Sans Souci their Majesties were ceremoniously received by Colonel von Kessel, who was uniformed like the Emperor and had under his command a company of giant grenadiers clad in the old-time blue and red coats, long white leggings reaching above the knees, and gilded tin helmets backed with scarlet on powdered wigs.

The scene of Menzel's picture, Frederick's Music Room, is the second apartment on the right after the dining-hall, which forms the centre of the chateau.

We found it brilliantly lit up with wax candles, too luminous to represent the original of the masterpiece and certainly far more resplendent with light than the miserly King would have permitted, of whom it is reported that he compelled his Queen and the Queen-Mother to await his coming in the White Hall of the Berlin Schloss previous to the great state functions, by the light of a single taper. Not until Frederick himself appeared among the guests and officials, durst the candles on the chandeliers and candelabra be lit.

Like other members of the Court and society, I had heard a great deal of William's predilection for stage management, but never had had occasion to witness the exercises of this particular gift on the Kaiser's part. Imagine my surprise when, suddenly, I found myself in the midst of a full-dress rehearsal!

In one corner of the room, huddled together like a flock of frightened sheep, stood the artists engaged for the occasion. All wore the eighteenth-century Court costume,—long-skirted vests and silk or velvet coats, colored satin breeches, buckled shoes, and imposing *allongé perruques*.

"Attention!" cried the Kaiser, and he began to call out their names without taking the trouble to affix the customary "Herr," while an imperious gesture of his gloved hand assigned each man to his post.

At the historic grand piano, which was once enlivened by the slender fingers of Princess Amalia, perhaps the greatest virtuoso of her time, a middle-aged artist was placed, whose make-up resembled the features of Philip Emanuel Bach, Frederick's accompanist. To his right the Kaiser posted a viola-player, representing Franz Benda of by-gone days, and behind them came two performers on the violoncello and finally two violinists.

The great King was impersonated by a small, thin man of noble countenance, who held between his fingers an exact counterpart of Frederick's favorite flute.

Having placed these gentlemen in position, the Kaiser had a copy of Menzel's painting brought in, and pointed out the figure each represented. "Now, first violin," rang out his drill-ground voice, "give more attention to holding your head!" "The piano-player must turn his face a little sideways!" "The 'cellists must bend down a bit!"

"That is right; now all remember that you are expecting your cue from the royal soloist."

Turning from the musicians, His Majesty called out: "Where are Quanz" (Frederick's music-teacher), "Graun" (the composer), "and Maupertuis?"

Three actors from the royal play-house responded.

"You have studied your parts?" said the Kaiser, inquiringly; "well, then, proceed to your various corners, and do not take notice of any one in the room. Play your parts as if you stood on a real stage, with the Kaiser in his box."

In the same manner the ladies of the Court were ordered about, and the Empress herself did not fare better.

"Countess Bassewitz!" shouted the royal stage-manager, as if he were addressing a *coryphée*, "please remember that the Margravine of Baireuth, whom you have the honor to represent, was not only noted for beauty and grace, but also for her truly royal airs."

Her little Ladyship blushed and moved uneasily on the red silk sofa where she sat with Countess Camas, whom Frederick used to call his *chère maman*.

Behind the chair of Madame von Camas, the Kaiser put an officer, a somewhat awkward young man, who had to change his position half a dozen times before it suited His Majesty, and then came the most difficult task of all,—the placing of the Empress.

We ladies had studied the part of Princess Amalia with Her Majesty incessantly for the last twenty-four hours, but Auguste Victoria seemed utterly unable to enter into the spirit of the tableau. Seeing her failure, she affected physical reasons for her nervousness, while everybody saw with regret that the Kaiser's imperious manner had completely disconcerted the royal Lady. In His Majesty's eyes this novice was the least satisfactory of all; she neither "understood how to hold a fan, nor how to look interested," and the scene was becoming very painful, when, to everybody's relief, House-marshal Baron von Lyncker appeared and announced that Professor Menzel's carriage was approaching. Thereupon the Emperor left at once to assume his character as Frederick the Great's Adjutant-General in the vestibule. We all breathed freer now, especially as Herr von Lyncker, the stage-manager—substitute, made us feel quite easy in our parts by a few words of approval.

Menzel had meanwhile alighted at the grand entrance, and ascended the stairs, wondering at the display of old-time military. The little old man wore shabby evening dress, and an overcoat over his arm, and his surprise knew no bounds when Colonel von Kessel stepped forward to welcome him with a ceremonious speech. When, however, von Kessel having "spoken his piece," the Kaiser himself marched up solemnly in his strange uniform, hat in hand, the artist perceived at once that he was to be the victim of an ovation and with much dignity submitted to the ordeal. For such it turned out to be. William, unbeknown to all except the master of ceremony, had imitated his ancestor in one more respect, and there was no Voltaire to wash *this* King of Prussia's "dirty linen."

As Prince Bismarck put it (I owe the anecdote to the great Chancellor's physician and confidant, Dr. Schwenninger), "he stepped into the lowest department of literature,

occasional poetry, and bombarded the helpless master with forty stanzas of alleged verse in which the deeds of Prussia's kings and the masterpieces that commemorate them were extolled with a prosiness that sounded like an afterclap of William's Reichstag and monument orations."

The length, if not the dulness, of the discourse had, however, one good effect: it gave Menzel ample time to formulate a fitting reply, and, bowing low at the conclusion of the tirade, he said, with perfect *sang-froid:* "I believe I have the honor of addressing Adjutant-General Baron von Leutulus, and I beg of Your Excellency to submit to His Majesty, the King, my sincerest thanks for this unexpected honor."

The artist having entered into the spirit of the thing, the Kaiser's impromptu farce proceeded smoothly. First of all came the obligatory review of the guards, who had to go through some old-time exercises; then Baron von Lyncker ordered the mixed company in the Music Room — Empress, ladies-in-waiting, actors, officers, and fiddlers—to assume the poses and duties assigned to each individually.

The master was allowed to contemplate the prototype of his *chef-d'œuvre* for a little while before he took his seat; but soon the Emperor, sitting by his side, gave the signal to the musicians, who intonated Frederick's flute concert, doubtless the finest composition that emanated from the great King's prolific pen.

Later on, the players performed a piano concert by Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, the young and enthusiastic gentleman who is credited with having been the lover of Madame Récamier and Madame de Stäel at the same time (Napoleon threatened to shut him up with the latter in some lonely castle, and exhibit their offspring at the country fairs as horrible examples of the union of

pedantry with bottomless conceit), and finally Joachim fascinated us all by the noblest rendition of Sebastian Bach's masterpieces.

We supped in the Marble Hall, whose superb cupola rests upon sixteen white pillars from Carrara, but the Kaiser's attempt to establish a "round table" resembling that of his ancestor was a failure. It is easy enough to arrange a mummery,—money and a little tailor's sense will do for that; but it is quite another thing to copy a Voltaire "eloquent as Cicero, witty as Plinius, and as learned as Agrippa;" a La Mettrie, D'Argens, Algarotti, or even a General Quintus Icilius. And it takes more than royal birth and fine jewels to impersonate a Princess Amalia, and more than beauty of face and a pair of graceful shoulders, such as the Countess Bassewitz possesses, to represent the witty Margravine!

While their Majesties and the company, after supper, were admiring the illuminated fountain, then the latest of novelties, I went once more into the Music Room, where the wax lights were burning at low ebb.

This, then, had been the theatre of Frederick's love-making; here reigned the sole queen of his heart, the only woman whom he loved after ascending the throne, as all contemporaries, from Abbé Denina to Voltaire, assert.

Portraits of this famous beauty between high mirrors in silver frames all around the room,—Venus-Barbarina coquetting with Pygmalion; Pomona-Barbarina yielding gracefully to the masked demi-god; Diana-Barbarina slumbering while pretty nymphs mount guard over her; Barbarina embraced by Apollo; Barbarina and Pan; Barbarina, the genius of Love; Barbarina the woman, clad only in her surpassing grace, her supernatural loveliness, the glorious black hair unsullied by powder, her breasts and limbs radiant with the voluptuousness of southern youth!

Antoine Pesne, painter to the King, expended all his genius as a colorist of the schools of Giorgione and Titian, all his true artistic intensity of feeling, on these canvases, which happily saw the light before the renaissance of the yellowish Rembrandt tint, that annoys the lover of art in the majority of portraits of a somewhat later period. Pesne was first and last a portrait-painter; but the King's desire to see the beloved woman in all sorts of attitudes, in classical garb and without, gave his magic brush a far wider field. Henceforth he devoted himself to composing grand mythological scenes in which La Barbarina formed the central figure and where unblushingly he drew the veil from the charms of her person.

I was contemplating these reminiscences in silent reverie when the door opened and the Kaiser came in with little Menzel.

"I have a mind to engage Angeli to paint Her Majesty's picture in the costume of Princess Amalia," said the Emperor. "What do you think of it?"

"Angeli is painter to many emperors and kings," replied the professor, and I saw him smile diplomatically as he moved his spectacles to get a better view of the allegorical canvas on the left wall that exhibits the nude figure of the famous mistress in its entirety.

"I am glad you agree with me on that point," said the Emperor, impatient to execute the idea that had just crossed his mind. "I will telegraph to him to-night."

And when, five minutes later, Menzel bent over my hand to take his formal leave, I heard him murmur in his dry, absent-minded manner: "Pesne—Angeli—Frederick the Great—William II!"

CHAPTER VIII

"Has anybody heard of the projected English tour of the Meiningens?" asked His Majesty at dinner in the Berlin Schloss one afternoon in February, 1892.

Herr von Egloffstein responded. He had heard the Hereditary Prince say that he and the Princess intended to accept an invitation of Queen Victoria to Windsor Castle.

"But the cost!" exclaimed the Kaiser; "it will be at least ten marks a head for their Highnesses every day they are absent."

Next day, at second breakfast, the Emperor's menu card, on which His Majesty had sketched "the future south front of the castle with the surrounding territory," was handed around the table.

"I am glad to announce to you," he said, after all had expressed due admiration, "that I have perfected my plans for the improvement of the Schloss. After abolishing the popular amusement of looking into the Kaiser's windows" (His Majesty referred to the dismantling of the houses on the Schloss Freiheit, where now the monument of William I stands, and which was formerly occupied by a row of decrepit old houses and shanties whose inhabitants had a very good view of the imperial apartments opposite),—"after routing the sweet plebs across the way, I have decided to erect another barrier between myself and publicity. As the sketch shows, terraces will be built adjoining the south

front of our palace, and they will extend far enough to place within the royal precinct that part of the castle square that lies between the Schloss and the great fountain. These terraces," added the Kaiser, with a self-satisfied laugh, "will at the same time serve to deaden some of the noise from the incessant traffic."

"Will the city be willing to sacrifice the space?" asked the Prince of Saxe-Altenburg, who was the guest of honor that day.

"If I permit the razing of the old houses between Breite Strasse and Kurfürsten Brücke, certainly," replied the Kaiser, who was still smiling.

"But the scheme, if pushed to such length, will involve an outlay of twenty millions," warned the Minister of the royal house, Herr von Wedell.

"Maybe, more or less." The Emperor said this with a frown, but immediately resumed his semi-bantering tone, and added, lightly: "Perhaps I will authorize Your Excellency to arrange another Schloss Improvement Lottery, or to take up a loan that holds out large premiums, as they do in Austria and Servia." With that he turned to his neighbor, the Countess Brockdorff, whom he detests and ordinarily treats with the severest indifference, and, by way of changing the subject, told her a rather *risqué* story of a little boy, who, being disturbed in the night, asked his father what was the matter. The father's reply is too well known to be printed here.

"Oh, bother the brother!" cried Johnny; "make me one of those rabbits with pink eyes."

Poor Brockdorff nearly fainted, and looked helplessly around the table, while the Emperor slapped his knee and seemed ready to burst with laughter. "It is the very latest," he said to His Highness of Saxe; "got it from Kotze" (then still a master of ceremony); "he heard it

from his wife, who learned it from Schrader" (another master of ceremony, who was subsequently shot and killed by his colleague in the famous duel), "and Schrader credits it to Otero."

That is the Kaiser all over; it worries him to think that any of his relatives should spend ten marks, and he disposes of ten or twenty millions of public moneys as if they were old bricks or oyster-shells; in fact, the Kaiser has no notion whatever of the value of the "yellow boys."

Among the many strange facts in this volume, William's remark concerning the Meiningens' trip to England is certainly not the least astonishing, coming from a man who is almost continuously on the road,—the heir and heiress to a Duchy, paying a visit of state at Windsor Castle, covering their combined expenses with a paltry five dollars a day! The surmisal is too ridiculous to require analysis; but it might be just as well to state here that the Prince of Meiningen is a very rich man, although the bulk of his fortune is still in the hands of the reigning Duke and the latter's third wife, the former actress Helen Franz, called Baroness Heldburg. He lives, if not in splendor, in the style befitting his station, and his wife is certainly the best-dressed woman at Court.

On their travels the princely pair are always attended by a suite of from fifteen to twenty people, all of whom, the Emperor thinks, can be provided with transportation and incidentals for twenty marks per day! That Her Majesty of England sent a very large check to the Prince of Meiningen to defray the expenses of his visit, as I happen to know, does not alter the case one whit, for William was, and is probably up to this day, ignorant of the fact.

"It is merely a matter of mistaken identity," said "Lottchen's" husband, when the Prince of Saxe reported the conversation to him; "William thinks I am one of

my gamekeepers, as he once mistook Bismarck for his chief bootblack."

That was certainly a charitable view to take; but it does not coincide with the facts. The cold, precise truth is that the man striving for absolute power in Germany and in Prussia, whose combined annual budgets reached the sum of three thousand one hundred and forty millions of marks in 1896, has, as already pointed out, no head for figures.

"His father, the lamented Frederick III, showed a woful lack of business capacity when he loaned the Prince of Wales those ten million marks 'to be repaid when he should become King of Great Britain,'" I heard Prince Stolberg, who was imperial grand-master at the time (the transaction took place May, 1888), say more than once, "but," added the distinguished feudal lord, "His late Majesty's subsequent financiering shows that his was an act of weakness, rather than of misconception of the risk involved. With the present Kaiser it is different. Whether you put the naught before or after the figure, it's all 'champagne and oysters' to him. He would be as generous as his father was, if he were capable of friendship."

It is clearly a deficiency in William's mental make-up: as some people lack the sense of locality, so the Emperor happens to be destitute of a proper comprehension of values. Units or tens, three, seven, or eight naughts,—His Majesty recognizes a distinction between these factors in one respect only. To quote once more Prince Stolberg, who, as is well known, soon tired of the job of "standing off Peter and owing Paul:" "I think I have done as well as anybody can with such a pupil of economics. I made him understand that the Reichstag people deal with millions, while we at Court must be content with using tens and hundreds and thousands, if it comes high."

This seems to be the only mathematical rule that has taken root in William's brain, and, agreeable to Stolberg's admonitions, he appears to have set himself a limit of three to ten marks for every-day use, and of fifty or one hundred marks for high days and holidays, so to speak. This applies, of course, to personal disbursements only, the requirements of the household, the travelling, representation, and amusement budgets being regulated by his grand officers and according to certain rules.

How well I remember the flutter and pleasant anticipations I experienced during my first Christmas season at the Prussian Court. Not that I nursed great expectations on my own behalf (I have been royalty's favorite all my life, and received many precious gifts from the old Emperor and Empress, as well as from my present master and mistress, in the days of my prosperity); but I felt for our faithful servants, whose lives, though spent in a palace, are harder in many respects than those of the general run of employees, or even of comparatively poor people. In their gorgeous liveries and tidy house-dresses they look suave and contented enough to the occasional beholder, but their lot is scarcely as happy as their serene faces indicate; neither do their wages correspond with their silver-edged clothes of fine material. Off and on I have heard of cases of poverty, even of destitution, in their families, for which they dared not ask relief in the most likely place, of their master or mistress, who caused it to be known once and for all that they must not be annoyed by their servants' personal concerns.

It is a hard rule, I argued, but may be imperative with so large a staff of people. In this bountiful Christmas season, surely, their Majesties will make up for it. Picture, then, my amazement when I heard the Emperor say to Her Majesty, at the beginning of Holy Week: "I have

cautioned Miessner (a privy councillor, who administers the royal purse) to pay the customary ten marks only to those servants—lackeys and maids—who wait upon me personally. It will be well for you to instruct Baron von Mirbach similarly, or you will run the risk of feeing a whole tribe of men and girls who are merely second or third assistants to your own people."

William's valets, I heard later on, received fifty marks from their imperial master as Christmas gratuity; all his other attendants, men and women, had to be content with the customary ten marks "for gingerbread," as the *pourboire* is styled at Court.

"And that is the only *Trinkgeld* the Kaiser dispenses all the year round," complained the wife of one of the wardrobemen, who does my plain sewing; "outside of Christmas, His Majesty never seems to have a pfennig for his bodyservants. Although himself continuously in want of stimulants (he often drinks four or five egg cognacs in the course of the day), it never strikes him that his overworked attendants might feel like stepping across the way to the canteen and 'crook an arm,' with Your Ladyship's permission."

Occasional beggars that accost him on his rides through Potsdam or Berlin receive three marks from the Emperor, and a like sum is appropriated every Sunday for the benefit of the contribution-plate; his adjutant hands him the coin before he steps into his carriage going to church; beggars must report at the royal stables for their mite.

Whether this tardy generosity is an evidence of hardheartedness, as people in the royal service claim, or whether the Kaiser's unlimited egotism is to blame, I would not like to decide; perhaps both work together, perhaps Count Stolberg's advice has something to do with it, while the Kaiser's inability properly to judge monetary values remains

the prime factor. To emphasize this latter point let me give one more anecdote.

William, who is nothing if not a slave to tradition, has revived a habit of several of his ancestors, namely, to stroll out of his palace gate as an ordinary mortal once a year, on *Heiliger Abend* (Holy Evening, the night before Christmas), when he dons the most subdued civilian dress his wardrobe affords, and when no adjutant, or any one of the body service, is allowed to follow him,—a general order that, however, does not apply to the secret police, which is made acquainted with the Kaiser's every out-door move beforehand, and has its guardian angels about wherever and whenever he is in the open.

"The war-lord, masquerading as a sub-officer on leave," as his brother-in-law of Meiningen once described him on a similar occasion, walks through the park behind the Neues Palais toward Sans Souci and often rambles beyond the gates of the ancient chateau, wishing a "Merry Christmas" to and distributing small gold pieces among needy persons he encounters.

It was originally a novel amusement for the Kaiser and a profitable one for the poor men and women who happened to attract his attention when his pockets were still lined; that is, while his charity fund of two hundred marks, divided up into fourteen gold crowns and three double crowns, lasted; and courtiers and others near William, having the higher interests of the monarchy at heart, used to rejoice in this solitary manifestation of royal good-will, that helped to re-cement the bonds between king and people, those bonds growing further and further apart in our democratic times when the most conspicuous representative of kingship has seemingly forgotten that there is anything in common between him and the rest of mankind.

"Will it please Your Majesty to go on your usual Santa-Claus expedition this evening before the trees are lit?" asked Court-marshal Count Eulenburg at second breakfast on the day preceding Christmas of 1894.

"Most certainly," replied the Kaiser, "and, by the way, direct Miessner to furnish me with silver coins, instead of gold, this time,—fourteen Thalers and three or four five-mark pieces. You see," he added, addressing himself to the Empress, "I have been thinking about this giving away of crowns and double crowns; some poor devil, whom I try to benefit, might arouse suspicion when he offers my Christmas present in payment. That element of distrust and danger I will circumvent by spending only Thalers among my needy friends hereafter."

"How thoughtful of you," lisped the Empress, devouring her husband with admiring glances.

"Your Majesty thinks of everything," said the Countesses von Brockdorff and von Bassewitz *unisono*. And "Of everything, particularly his pocket," whispered my neighbor, Count M——, mockingly. For my own part, I was in hopes that the Kaiser might reconsider the matter and arm himself with the full quota of two hundred marks in silver before he started out; but when he came to take leave of Her Majesty, he drew from his overcoat pocket the shabby little amount he had decided to spend, fifty-seven marks in all, brand new silver pieces each one of them.

"The poor are in luck to-night," he said. "Miessner selected the brightest Thalers in his treasury, they are really very pretty," and the Kaiser laughed as the hapless Princess Lamballe may have laughed as she exclaimed: "If the poor have no bread, let them eat pastry."

As little as I would be inclined to charge the young beauty who gave her head for Marie Antoinette's friendship, with heartlessness, as little do I agree with Count

M——'s uncharitable surmisal, that the Kaiser resolved upon the change from crowns to marks for reasons of economy. On the contrary, the probabilities are that he did not consider the losses his poor would suffer or the saving on his own part, for one single moment, his inability to judge values rightly precluding such a course.

This strange state of mind is not without pathological interest, of which more anon; but as a secondary cause the practice of bringing up young princes in complete ignorance of money-matters must be held responsible.

Royal parents seem to think that to deprive their sons up to the day of their majority of a decent amount of pocket-money is the surest, nay, the only way to keep their boys from becoming spendthrifts.

In Prussia, the princely youth is allowed a few Thalers per week, of which the minutest accounting is demanded, and which—and that is the worst feature—he may not even manage in person, that privilege being reserved for his governor or Court-marshal. The practice has worked havoc immeasurable with us, as well as with others; but there seems to be little hope that this doltish idea, worthy of its avaricious progenitor, Frederick William I of Prussia, will be abandoned in a hurry.

True, young Hohenzollerns are not liable to be flogged nowadays for spending a few pfennigs unnecessarily, as Crown Prince Frederick was when he gave a royal servant eight Groschens for bringing his dog from Potsdam to Wusterhausem, a distance of twenty miles (his father beat him "for having no more sense than to pay a man who merely performed his damned duty"); but even so wide-awake a woman as the Empress Frederick insisted upon bringing up the heir to the throne without giving him a chance to acquaint himself with the power, the temptation, the misery, and the joy that the possession of ready money

carries with it. As the holes in the Greek philosopher's toga denoted vanity rather than contempt of worldly opinion, so the patches on a youthful Hohenzollern's trousers indicate not Spartan frugality, but a false notion of the principles of economics. Our Princes are not taught that it is necessary to economize in order to be liberal; they are merely deprived of things they like,—good clothes and cash,—in obedience to a hoary delusion that has peopled the thrones of Europe with spendthrifts or niggards for the past century.

I have heard the former Court-marshal von Liebenau say that William, when at college, never had a copper over and above his expenses, all of which were disbursed by him, Liebenau.

"When he entered active service, that old bane—penury—hovered over the lieutenant, captain, and colonel; his entire income was made over to me every month or quarter, and as it was always spoken for in advance, my young master even aspired in vain for a pocket-piece, a double gold crown."

Is it to be wondered at that the victim of these educational methods, having been unable to acquire intimate acquaintance with the *nervus rerum*, persists to this day in a childish attitude toward financial questions, and, having all his own wants attended to as a matter of course, fails to understand or appreciate what is due to others?

Personal friends of the Emperor and Empress Frederick have defended their Majesties' short-sighted course on the plea of tradition and conservatism; but that apology is hardly pertinent in view of the fact that William's parents had before them two awful examples depicting the sorry consequences of such bringing-up as they were meting out to their son.

All through the childhood and youth of the Prince Royal the Prussian Court was occupied with the contemplation

of the vagaries of Louis II of Bavaria, a Prince whose wild extravagances and contempt for the science of addition and subtraction were directly traceable to his sordid and excessively severe training. I myself have heard the Crown Princess tell, with many expressions of condemnation and regret, of the austere regimen that prevailed in the Munich Hofburg under Maximilian Joseph II and his consort, Marie, daughter of Prince William of Prussia. Once, in the early sixties, when the Court was summering at Babelsberg, Her Royal Highness read us a letter from the Queen of Bavaria to Queen Augusta. "I am in despair," wrote Her Majesty, "and hardly know where to turn. I cannot conscientiously oppose the King's educational methods, still it is hard to see my children suffer under a system that robs them of all the little joys of life. The King will not allow our boys to have more than eight Groschens" (twenty cents) "pocket-money per week,—a ridiculous amount, do you not think so? Yesterday I learned that Ludwig" (who became King two or three years afterward, in March, 1864) "had contracted with a dentist to have two of his sound molar teeth pulled, for which the boy was to get twenty florins. The Prince had given a fictitious name, and the dentist heard only by the merest accident, and at the last moment, whom he had before him. Of course he quailed on learning the truth, and very properly informed our Court-marshal, who in turn acquainted me with the facts. I forbade him to mention the matter to His Majesty," the Queen went on to say, "but I am afraid it will penetrate to the all-highest ears by and by, and then the Prince's allowance may be cut off altogether."

In later years similar accounts were received from Camden House, Chislehurst, the residence of the widowed Empress of the French and the Prince Imperial. The

former Countess of Teba had adopted the system of her more "legitimate" royal brothers and sisters, and made her only son's life a hell by withholding from him a suitable appanage. This bright young Prince had to maintain a position among the gilded youth of London on an allowance that barely covered the cost of his cab-fares and theatre-tickets, and in consequence the former pleasant relations between mother and son were grievously disturbed.

"The old mercenary spirit seems to have come over the Montijo woman once more," said the Empress Augusta, who, through her reader, a talented French poet, was always particularly well informed with reference to affairs in Chislehurst; "she treats her son as if he were a clerk of her grandfather, Mr. Kirkpatrick, sometime consul in Malaga. And she expects to reinstate this young man, who is never allowed to handle enough money to buy himself a pony, on the throne of France!"

And in the summer of 1879, after poor Lulu had breathed his last under a cloud of poisoned arrows, Her Majesty asserted, on the authority of Comte d'Herrison, who had been on very intimate terms with Napoleon III, that Eugenie had driven her son into this senseless war and to death, by her avarice.

If we could only see ourselves as we see others!

Here we have two of the wisest royal heads of the century, the Empresses Augusta and Frederick, criticising their friends on account of a detestable and dangerous method that flourished at their own firesides scarcely less conspicuously than at Munich and Camden House, and must have come under their notice almost daily for tens of years in succession!

Verily, the Bourbons are not the only ones who never learn anything and never forget anything; and Alexander the First's criticism on the discrowned; "they are *incorrigés*

and *incorrigibles*," which the Kaiser is so fond of applying to some of his dear relatives, notably Duke Günther of Schleswig and the Crown Prince of Roumania, might be laid at the door of every man and woman born in the purple, so far as my experience at the various courts goes.

We now return to that twenty-million project launched with so much self-satisfied complacency "between soup and fish." On the eve of its birthday—for we learned by and by that the Kaiser, who picked up the idea in a rambling memorial of his granduncle, the mad Frederick William IV, and, after adopting and fathering the plans, made haste to parade them before the visiting Prince and the Court as his own and as something brand new—at supper, the same day, William brought forward many fresh arguments in favor of his grand schemes.

The municipal council, he explained, if it were not entirely composed of Socialists, could not offer any objection to his plans, "no matter what the cost," for he meant to give the terraces over to his sons as a play-ground. Wedell must argue that the terraces would offer a formidable bulwark against the plans of anarchists. And as a final trump: "We will promise to prolong the annual stay of the Court at Berlin at least one month or six weeks."

"Point No. 2," said Minister von Boetticher to his wife, who was my neighbor in the *petit cercle* in the Concert Room, "will force Caprivi to shut up shop. He cannot afford to drop Bismarck's Socialist laws and on top of it shout about anarchistic danger." And, turning to me, His Excellency asked: "Are the children ever permitted to play on the terraces on the Lustgarten side?"

"The poor boys never go outside the castle gate, except in their old blue landau," I answered.

"I thought so," smiled Boetticher, with a side glance at Herr von Wedell, who was standing with His Majesty in

one of the windows, seemingly listening to most important disclosures, "and it will make the House Ministry's position the more difficult. If the existing terraces are never utilized for the purposes claimed as the *raison d'être* for new grants, the argument stands on very rickety ground. Your Ladyship might hint so much to Her Majesty."

"No, thank you," I declared, "*this* Ladyship knows better than to doubt the Emperor's omniscience in his wife's presence." I had spoken with unusual emphasis, and Herr and Madame von Boetticher laughed so heartily as to attract attention all around.

"I wonder if His Majesty will catch many *zucours*, as they say in your country, with his promise to reside longer than usual in the capital?" said, in another part of the hall, the Hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern, *née* Princess de Bourbon, to "little Mrs. Aribert" of Anhalt.

"I don't know if I quite understood you, cousin," replied Princess Louise, haughtily; "but, at any rate, be informed that the word you intended using is an Americanism, not an English term, and very inelegant besides. As for the rest, I think the Berliners have every reason to place implicit confidence in His Majesty's word."

During the next week or so, at luncheon, dinner, and supper, at receptions, concerts, and balls, the Court talked of nothing but the projected castle improvements, and the Kaiser never wearied of explaining his plans to visitors privately, and to a roomful of guests and attendants collectively. Then, suddenly, a change of base was decreed. The terraces were hurled from their imaginary pedestals, and in their stead the ever ready imperial pencil pictured to us the Schloss situated on a green peninsula, and surrounded by majestic waters on three sides. According to this latest plan, Schinkel's classic Academy of Architecture was to be levelled, and Schinkel Square dropped fifty feet, to make

room for a splendid lake five acres in circumference, the waters of which were to wash the feet of William the First's gigantic monument.

The scheme looked uncommonly well on paper, and His Majesty experienced small difficulty in finding theoretical supporters for his sublime projects; but, unfortunately, the matter got into the newspapers even before preliminary negotiations with the city authorities had been opened, and a storm of indignation, ridicule, and defiance broke loose.

"Not a pfennig for these *baunaerrische*" (construction-mad) "schemes, not an inch of city property," began a press article, which I was obliged to read to Her Majesty a few mornings later; and "the times are past when nations build palaces for spendthrift sovereigns," wrote somebody, who desired to remain nameless, to William in a letter postmarked Berlin W., the fashionable quarter; "we pay the King of Prussia a salary nowadays, and he has to get along on it as well as any other official, unless, like an army officer, he married a woman with money."

The protests from the provinces were not less vigorous. It appears that the minister of the royal house, for some time past, had endeavored to persuade the authorities of Hannover, Cassel, and Wiesbaden, where royal theatres are established, to release the exchequer from its obligation to furnish a subsidy for the maintenance of these institutions. "The royal Princes," wrote the eloquent Herr von Wedell, "are growing up, and funds for their education, their proper maintenance, clothes, and so forth, must be set aside. In view of this increase of his obligatory expenses, His Majesty has reluctantly consented to a curtailment of such outlays as come under the head of contingent charges," etc.

Well worded, was it not? this appeal on behalf of one's six boys; but the Hannoverians, Casselers, and Wiesbadeners

refused to be bamboozled. They stood upon their rights, and when, in the course of events, the Kaiser's great building plans were divulged, they congratulated themselves upon their firmness, with many disrespectful allusions to the baby act that had failed.

And the end of it all? The scandal assumed such proportions that there was nothing left but a complete backdown.

On the 9th of March it was announced at luncheon that His Majesty had gone to Hubertusstock, where he does most of his sulking, and in the afternoon Minister von Boetticher got up in the Diet and quieted public opinion by a few well-set lies.

"Those grand building projects," he said, "have never had any existence except in the brains of hungry penny-a-liners and ambitious architects. Nobody at Court has ever dreamed of their realization. In fact, they have never been discussed in the all-highest presence."

"The greatest fools are always the greatest liars," Prince Bismarck laughingly remarked to Duke Johann Albrecht of Mecklenburg, when His Highness related the facts to him.

"Do you refer to Boetticher or ——?"

"To Boetticher, of course; am I not his sworn enemy, according to the newspapers?" replied the old Prince; "to Boetticher," he repeated, "who prophesied Caprivi's fall, and, to save his own neck, had to lie publicly and shamelessly,—a thing I have never done during my long official life."

Another deadly parallel of the extreme in the Kaiser's character, similar to that exemplified by the Meiningen and the building-project matters, might be drawn by placing the reported reduction of His Majesty's Christmas charity in juxtaposition to his contemplated appropriation of certain public moneys intrusted to his keeping.

I refer to the so-called "Imperial Disposition Fund," intended to afford relief to Prussian and German veterans of the wars and in case of great national disasters. As its name implies, the right of bestowing grants out of the three million marks, annually set aside for the purposes specified, is vested in the sovereign,—reason enough for William, who recognizes no obligation that conflicts with his "all-highest" pleasure, to regard the money as a sort of augmentation of the civil list, in the same way as he takes the naval phrases, "His Majesty's cruiser," "His Majesty's torpedo," etc., literally.

To convey a thorough understanding of this matter, we shall have to go back to the events of March, 1892. It was my imperial mistress who, after the withdrawal of Count Zedlitz's common-school law, persuaded von Caprivi to remain in office.

"*Votre petite guerre est fini*," said the Emperor to Her Majesty at supper on March 28, "and you have not been luckier than Madame Eugenie. Rest assured, though, that I will not be in the market again for any of Uncle Christian's ultra-Christian plans. No, we will not go to Cumberland Lodge a second time."

Her Majesty grew pale and blushed violently in rapid succession. Her bosom heaved, and some of the wine in the glass she was raising to her lips spilled over her superb gown.

"I do not quite understand, Willie," she said at last, lisping painfully in her agitation.

"Beg Your Majesty's pardon," was the Kaiser's sarcastic reply; "I thought everybody knew by this time that I had to withdraw the *Volksschulgesetz* and turn Zedlitz adrift. My government was fast becoming the laughing-stock of Europe with this Augustenburg sort of legislation, as Bismarck styles it."

"The old enemy of our house ——" whimpered Auguste Victoria.

"You are mistaken in your surmisal: I am not quoting from the *Hamburger Nachrichten.* The Prince expressed himself thus toward your uncle Waldersee, pointing out at the same time the risks I was running in advocating a law liable to be associated in public opinion with petticoat and family influences."

I did not hear the whole of the above conversation, and lost the rest of it altogether, as, by the Empress's request, William lowered his voice after this last sally; but Her Majesty repeated it word for word when we ladies attended her in her dressing-room later on. "The Kaiser chooses to put all the blame for this failure upon myself and my family," she said, amid a flood of tears; "but, by all that is holy to me, I swear, neither my uncle, nor I personally, had anything to do with the launching of the *Volksschulgesetz.* Prince Christian, it is true, has endeavored to impress His Majesty with the importance of his religious duties as *summus episcopus*, and the two gentlemen have had conferences about the best ways and means to combat disbelief and atheism in Germany, but I am convinced that my uncle never ventured advice on matters of legislation. He merely tried to rouse my husband's interest in divine matters, as any ardent follower of the Lord should do. The *Volksschulgesetz* as such was the Kaiser's own creation, though some of the ideas incorporated in it might have come from across the channel."

"Your Majesty should not have minded the Kaiser's ill-humor," I ventured to say; "the attitude of Parliament and the press naturally angered him and ——"

"I know, I know," interrupted Auguste Victoria; "I can forget everything but the words: 'We will not go to Cumberland Lodge a second time.' It was there, at my

uncle's seat, that William and I fell in love with each other."

The Kaiser slept, on the night that followed Count Zedlitz's enforced resignation, in his little private bedroom, and next morning departed for Hubertusstock before Her Majesty had arisen. That was enough to paint our gilded *salons* an ashen gray, in which the children, Her Majesty's ladies, friends, and attendants, vanished as if behind a cloud. Auguste Victoria refused to be comforted: her husband had left her in a fit of irritation; the sovereign lady was seemingly incapable of turning her thoughts from the disquieting subject. In the midst of her lamentations, a despatch arrived from Queen Victoria, which I was ordered to decipher. "It is reported here that Caprivi will resign. Let it be averted at all hazards. It would be nothing short of a calamity just now," telegraphed the Kaiser's grandmother.

"I will drive to the Chancellor at once," cried the Kaiserin, so great is her respect for Queen Victoria's political wisdom; but the Grand-mistress, Countess Brockdorff, succeeded in dissuading her from so extraordinary a step by referring to the lack of precedents and sundry scruples of etiquette. Finally, it was agreed that Her Majesty should write to Caprivi; and all of us—the Kaiserin, Countess Brockdorff, Fräulein von Gersdorff, and myself—worked out draughts for the important epistle, with the understanding that the best of the four, containing certain points upon which we had settled, should be adopted and sent off after Her Majesty had copied it. Of course, a lot of ink was spilled uselessly, and a still greater amount of time wasted, in discussing the merits of our various attempts; but in the end a reasonably appropriate paper was pieced together, whose leading passages read as follows:

"Pray do not leave the Kaiser in the lurch, and thus commit the country to an uncertain future now that the relations between the Crown and its first officer have once more strengthened, and most things that fell into a chaotic condition after Bismarck's retirement are being straightened out."

Herr von der Knesebeck carried the letter to Wilhelms Strasse, and brought back the reassuring message that His Excellency considered it a great honor to obey Her Majesty's command, and that he would wait upon the Kaiser in Hubertusstock the same evening.

The rest is history: Caprivi consented to remain in office, and the Zedlitz incident was no longer mentioned at Court.

All this, it will be remembered, happened in March, 1892. Two years later, the Empress thought quite differently about a change in the Chancellorship. By that time she had grown more and more isolated on the throne, with a husband always absent, if not physically, mentally, and the members of the royal family becoming estranged from her Court one after another. The necessity of having a relative in a commanding position near her, a man of her own caste, who understood her, an equal upon whom she could lean, became more imperative every day.

Waldersee it could not be. "Ah! if we had only Uncle Chlodwig with us." How often was this pious wish on my mistress's lips during the first half of the year 1894! "He is such a grand seigneur," she used to say, "and as mild and temperate as a good priest! What an example he would be for my children!"

"He is also credited with an unusual amount of tenacity," I remarked on one of these occasions.

"You do not consider that a fault, Countess?" Her Majesty had assumed a supercilious tone, but quickly added,

in an anxious voice: "It is, of course, out of the question that he should offer opposition to His Majesty as Bismarck did and as this Caprivi is doing."

"I don't know about that. He told his former sovereign, King Louis of Bavaria: 'I possess all the attributes of birth and rank that any king in Christendom may lay claim to.'"

This intelligence did not please the Kaiserin, though her own mother is a Hohenlohe; but her scruples on that score had evidently worn off, or she had forgotten all about the incident, when the Kaiser, on October 25, upon his return from the memorable visit to Liebenberg, Count Philip Eulenburg's country-seat, asked her to write to Strassburg and "probe her uncle as to his willingness to accept the Chancellorship." As the German says, she was immediately "fire and flame for the project," and, after finishing her letter to the Emperor's lieutenant in the Reichslande, she sat up half the night scribbling to her mother, sisters, brother, and her relatives in England to tell them of Uncle Chlodwig's "good luck" and her own happiness at the contemplated ending of the "crisis," which, by the way, had come so suddenly that the royal ladies and gentlemen, or at least some of them, were completely taken by surprise. As the Duchess Frederick Ferdinand of Glücksburg put it, in her letter of reply: "We were just congratulating ourselves upon the vote of confidence William bestowed upon Caprivi on Tuesday, October 23 (it was reported in our *Moniteur*, the *Eckernfoerder Zeitung*, last night), when your Job's message came to hand."

"There," said Her Majesty, as she handed the bundle of envelopes to Herr von der Knesebeck, "I have informed everybody that my husband will have peace hereafter, the chief cause of his anger and irritation, a querulous and obstreperous servant, being sent back into obscurity."

Needless to say, the Kaiser could not wait until an answer to Auguste Victoria's letter arrived from Alsace. Next morning, a Friday, Herr von Lucanus, Chief of the Civil Cabinet, went to Caprivi, demanding, in the Kaiser's name, his immediate resignation, and when the General had complied with the request, William began telegraphing to Uncle Chlodwig, requesting him to accept.

The old Prince answered that he would leave the decision to his wife, who knew him best. If "Marie" thought the state of his health permitted an increase of his labors at his great age, he would follow the King's call. And "Auguste wants you. Be at the Schloss to-night," read Wilhelm's urgent rejoinder.

We ladies of the Court were kept informed of these high political carryings on by the Emperor himself, who ran in and out of Her Majesty's rooms constantly in those eventful days. "I have just learned that your aunt Marie is summering at Aussee" (with these words the Kaiser entered Her Majesty's study shortly before tea-time); "send her a despatch saying that the Fatherland has a right to demand this sacrifice of her. I need Hohenlohe; he is the only man who can bridge over the present crisis."

The Emperor's commission, his confidence, made Her Majesty unspeakably happy. "It is one thing to be a Queen, and another to reign," she said, proudly, when William had left, after correcting and partly rewriting her despatch.

Who could have withstood this electric campaign? Hohenlohe capitulated after forty-eight hours of prodding and promising, and on the 30th of the month their Majesties thanked Princess Marie in a joint telegram for her patriotism and disinterestedness.

The palace now once more became a place where one could eat and sleep in comfort, go to bed at stated hours,

and set about one's morning toilet without fear of being called away at the most inopportune moment to decipher despatches, run errands completely out of one's sphere, or help to dry the royal mistress's tears. The Kaiser, proud of his victory, the assertion of his self-will, gave himself over to the usual round of pleasures,—the chase, all sorts of unveiling and dedication ceremonies, the theatre, visiting, and military display; the Empress made it her business to appear happy and contented. She had been allowed to play a political part, the threads of a great state intrigue had rested momentarily in her hands; her ambition to become a second Queen Louise might not be unattainable after all. But we propose, and our dear relations dispose. Hohenlohe had not been in office a week when the fifty-six other Hohenlohes (you find them enumerated in the Almanach de Gotha), fortified and backed by their one hundred and sixty-odd grandmothers, mothers, aunts, wives, and daughters, began pestering the Court, and finally their Majesties themselves, with allusions to the great discrepancy between their kinsman's modest stipend as Chancellor and his former salary as Emperor's lieutenant in Alsace,—a difference of a round hundred thousand marks per annum.

"It is impossible, from the family's standpoint, to permit such a sacrifice without indemnification."

"The Prince belongs, above all, to his kindred, whose glory and prosperity he is bound to help to increase." The latter phrase seems to be a free translation of the *semper Augustus* of the Roman imperators. "How can he be expected to live up to his duties as chief of the first branch of the younger line of the Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingsfürsts if he throws away a fortune every year of his life?"

"Uncle Chlodwig," so ran another line of argument, "is not a gay bachelor, but a father and grandfather, an

uncle and cousin times innumerable. Dozens of Hohenlohes, besides his own children, depend for part of their income, at present or after his death, upon the noble old man, and to all these the enormous curtailment of salary is nothing short of a calamity."

A third batch of correspondents bluntly stated that "inasmuch as Hohenlohe had consented to accept the Chancellorship to please the Emperor, His Majesty was in honor bound to make good his pecuniary losses."

Epistles of this sort kept Auguste Victoria in a turmoil all through the month of November, the Emperor having refused to be disturbed by these screechings, after perusing one or two of the kind which showed conclusively whence the wind was blowing, as His Majesty expressed himself. Thereafter letters postmarked Waldenburg, Rauden, Bartenstein, Haltenbergstetten, Budapest, Lublinitz, or from any other city or place where the "damned curmudgeons reside," had to be delivered to the Kaiserin, whether addressed to William personally or not, the occasional absence of the well-known crest, with its tailed quadrupeds and crowned fowl, making no difference, "as some princes and noblemen are not above borrowing a neighbor's seal" when they have reason to believe that their letters, if recognized, may go unnoticed.

The adjutants *du jour* left *billets-doux* of that kind by the handful morning after morning at the Empress's rooms, and Her Majesty's morbid curiosity, a characteristic strongly developed in lonely women,—and the Empress is lonely even in her children's midst and surrounded by a houseful of friends,—her morbidness made her not only notice these grievances and accusations, but study them, ponder over them. Only once have I seen my mistress unconcerned when thus employed,—at the suggestion that Uncle Chlodwig needed a big salary, such

as he had possessed and lost, in order to live in the style befitting his rank.

"Uncle Chlodwig a pauper!" she cried. "That is news, indeed; a poor man owning residential palaces in several capitals, and castles and country-houses all over Germany and in Austria!"

"Of course, the statement is ridiculous," said Baron von Mirbach; "but it is a fact, nevertheless, that His Grace has been sorely disappointed with respect to his Russian properties, or rather his wife's Russian inheritance, the Wittgenstein domains. The law prohibiting foreigners from holding property in Russia has forced him to dispose of many miles of territory at ruinous prices."

"I know," said the Empress, "and am glad that the Kaiser promised to intervene with the Czar on that account. 'Nicky,' I am sure, will arrange matters satisfactorily."

"The Prince's relatives seem to know nothing of such an understanding," I remarked.

"Of course not," replied Her Majesty, "for it is a state secret which, when I come to think of it, I should have more respected. But now that it is out, let me add that my husband's promise to secure a favorable settlement of those Russian affairs did more than all other arguments toward persuading the Prince to accept the Chancellorship."

This one-sided correspondence would probably have died out after a while for lack of argumentative fuel, if for no other reason, and the matter of the Chancellor's salary would have been forgotten, if, all of a sudden, the hydra of the anonymous letter had not raised its head again.

Herr von Kotze, the Imperial Master of Ceremony, suspected of flooding the Court with unspeakable accusations through nameless letters, had been released from custody

July 5, and the lascivious pasquinades—his alleged fabrications—which regularly arrived throughout the time of his detention, had ceased coming for months.

"Your Majesty ought really not to be so hard on Hohenlohe on the salary question, considering that you have but to ask your wife's mother about the good uses Hohenlohe is making of his wealth. Indeed, if it had not been for 'Cousin Chlodwig,' the Duchess Adelaide and her children, among them the present German Empress, might have gone hungry many a day while the Augustenburger was fighting" (on paper) "for his throne." This letter the Emperor found in Berlin, November 15, on the eve of the day when he made that remarkable speech at the swearing-in of recruits, wherein he told those green boobies (in defiance of common-sense and grammar—I translate literally): "by donning the King's coat you have become something aristocratic."

William often expresses opinions of that sort, and I should not be surprised if in his heart of hearts he fully believed that his uniform turns the average rustic lubber into a person of distinction, and places him above the rank of citizen. What a blow it must have been to him to learn on top of that speech that his wife's mother, his wife herself, at one time were beneficiaries of the man whom he had just created chief servant!

That evening the princely couple of Meiningen, Duke Günther and the hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern, took supper at Court, and to these relatives the Kaiser showed the letter just received.

"You are not going to send Leberecht back to Linden Strasse" (the military prison), said Princess Charlotte, who is intimate enough with Kotze to call him by his Christian name.

"Your fool-friend has no part in my meditations just now," answered William, gruffly. "I am thinking about

ways and means to stifle this new scandal. The report—whether true or not is immaterial—that the German Empress's mother accepted charity from a Hohenlohe must not be allowed to spread, and I see but one way to prevent it: those salary-grabbers must be appeased; the income of Emperor's lieutenant must be restored to the Chancellor."

Thus far the Emperor had spoken in a loud, almost vehement manner, so that the ladies and gentlemen, standing at a respectful distance, lost not a syllable of his tirade; but as he proceeded he lowered his voice, and I do not believe that the rest of his speech was understood by anybody outside of the royal circle, for, acting as lady *du jour* on that occasion, and as, besides, I was waiting to hand my mistress a *mouchoir* before we went to table, I was nearest to His Majesty, and, though my hearing is good, I failed to catch a word of what he said in confidence.

The import of it all I learned, however, the same evening, without solicitation on my part, from one of the royal guests, who whispered, as we stood listening to the music: "I begin to believe those rumors charging my ——" (the Emperor) "with having made inroads upon the Guelph Fund, seeing that he means to seize upon the *Dispositionsfond* to repay Hohenlohe for advances made to his mother-in-law."

"What does Your Royal Highness mean?"

"That the Kaiser told us to-night he was resolved to grant Hohenlohe an annual augmentation of his salary, amounting to one hundred thousand marks, out of the fund appropriated by the Reichstag for the benefit of crippled soldiers, widows, and orphans, and of the victims of fire, storm, and other elementary misfortunes."

"Impossible! It would be malfeasance."

"A steal; just so, *gnädige Gräfin*, if—if a semi-demented person could be guilty of crime."

CHAPTER IX

Life at Court ran in smooth channels for some weeks following the little family party just described; the coroneted graphomaniacs who had embroiled the imperial couple in the nastiest sort of family dispute stopped writing after firing one more broadside of admiration and excuses, instead of distrust and calumny as before, and the political horizon being unusually tranquil, the Kaiser and Kaiserin gave themselves up to the pleasures of the season, His Majesty hunting and speechifying, dining out, and enjoying little trips, the Empress knitting and sewing for the orphan asylums and making other preparations for Christmas. "Uncle Chlodwig" was now a frequent guest at the Neues Palais, and his relations with William were seemingly of the best, although it struck me that the young Kaiser treated the old man in a rather patronizing way, as if he meant to insinuate: "Remember what I have done for you, and that, like a true benefactor, I have acted promptly and without fuss."

Toward the end of the month another anonymous letter, this time addressed to Her Majesty, was received. It prophesied grave troubles, "for," said the writer, "the *Dispositionsfond* affair is known to the press," but as nothing relating to it was printed during the next four or five days, Her Majesty concluded that a hoax had been practised upon her. On December 6 occurred the great Reichstag scandal: the Socialistic members refused to rise

from their seats when the house honored the sovereign by a huzza.

I thought Her Majesty would fall ill with indignation and rage when the matter was first brought to her attention, but, contrary to expectation, we found the Kaiser calm and dignified. "If this demonstration," he said, in the course of the evening meal, "was aimed at me, it was a failure; it did not reach the tips of my boots. On the other hand, the Socialistic rabble has trampled on the dignity of the Reichstag wantonly and maliciously, and for this the Reichstag must demand satisfaction. As for my government, the occurrence is water for our mills. It means the success of the *Umsturtz Vorlage*" (the anti-revolutionary bill).

All agreed upon this point as a matter of course, and therewith the incident was set at rest, we thought, so far as the Court was concerned, but, unfortunately, the Kaiser changed his mind as to the impersonality of the target. After repeating the temperate and statesmanlike interpretation of the incident above quoted to Herr von Letzow, Baron von Buol, and Dr. Bürklin, the presidents of the Reichstag, who called at the Neues Palais on Sunday, December 9, he ordered Prince Hohenlohe, by an autograph note, indited twenty-four hours later, to ask permission of the Reichstag to prosecute the Socialist leader Liebknecht for *lèse majesté* then and there, the consent of that body being necessary, as the constitution guarantees to members of parliament immunity from arrest during sessions.

There was much groaning in the palace when the Reichstag refused to create so dangerous a precedent. The Kaiser characterized the unfavorable vote by saying that the nation's deputies were suffering, "one and all, from *Rothe Ruhr*" (bloody flux), "and therefore could not be at their

Emperor's service;" but the graver consequences of this useless stirring up of opposition developed somewhat later, and the Emperor, Hohenlohe, and the Court all suffered in consequence.

There appeared, shortly before the holidays, in the Berlin *Post*, known as the organ of the foreign ministries, an *entrefilet*, purporting to correct a paragraph printed in an obscure Socialistic sheet, that hinted darkly at a conspiracy between Kaiser and Chancellor to defraud a public fund, and, with the clumsiness that distinguishes the official fault-finder, the *Post* "dumped the child with the bath-water," as Bismarck used to say. It denied the conspiracy, and then calmly told the damning truth of the matter; namely, that His Majesty, in recognition of Prince Hohenlohe's distinguished services, his patriotism and disinterestedness, had been "graciously pleased to grant him an extra subvention of one hundred thousand marks from the charity fund at his disposal." Now the *Post*, an afternoon paper, is usually not delivered at the Neues Palais until next morning, but that night a stray copy found its way to the adjutant's room, and His Majesty appeared at the supper table with a darkened brow. He was most ungracious toward Her Majesty, and all the ladies, myself included, were treated to sarcastic remarks that often approached downright rudeness.

"A thunder-storm is gathering—I wonder who will be hurt?" remarked my neighbor, Herr von Egloffstein, *sotto voce*. At that moment the chasseur handed the Kaiser a letter bearing a great official seal.

"There," said His Majesty to the Empress, after perusing the missive, "your uncle thanks me for my good intentions, and relinquishes, at the first blast from the enemy's camp, the fortune I threw into his lap. But," he added, rising and casting an inquisitorial look around the table,

"I will find out who bears tales from my own house to dirty newsmongers, if I have to people Linden Strasse prison as Spandau was peopled at the time of the Trosqui conspiracy."[1]

The Kaiser left the dining-room without offering his arm to the Empress, and as Her Majesty followed him to inquire the meaning of the scene, we of the service (there were no guests that evening) were free to hold an impromptu confab among ourselves.

Adjutant von Moltke, who had read the *Post*, explained the situation.

"Great God!" cried Countess Brockdorff, "His Majesty thinks one of us played informer in the *Dispositionsfond* matter."

"But this is the first we hear of it," said Mademoiselle von Bassewitz.

"It is the newest sort of news to me," shrieked Fräulein von Gersdorff.

"As Her Excellency knows," I said, looking straight at the grand-mistress, "Her Majesty received an anonymous letter threatening an *exposé*, such as has occurred now, two or three weeks ago."

"I remember," replied Madame von Brockdorff, slowly.

"But," cried Count Moltke and Herr von Egloffstein, with one voice, "why didn't you ladies report this to His Majesty? The scandal, if not avoided, might have been nipped in the bud."

"It was the grand-mistress's office to give information of that kind," I said; an opinion in which the gentlemen upheld me.

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[1] A mysterious plot, in which a lady-in-waiting to Frederick the Great's mother, Madame de Blasphil, was involved; she escaped the ignominy of being put on the rack only by a miracle.

While we were still conversing, Her Majesty returned. Her eyes were red, and she was evidently laboring under great agitation. Calling Countess Brockdorff to her side, she began to talk to her in the most earnest manner, while the rest of us sat about aimlessly, helplessly. As Madame Carette says in her "*Souvenirs intimes de la cour des Tuileries:*" "The presence of the sovereign forbids, as a matter of course, every attempt at unchecked conversation." How much greater is the strain when the royal mistress, to the knowledge of all present, is suffering from her husband's displeasure, and the courtiers themselves are under a grave charge of suspicion! When Her Majesty, long before the usual hour, bade us a half-hearted good-night, a feeling of relief came over me; but the relaxation did not last long, for when I reached my apartments I found a printed notice under the door,—an order to "appear before the Royal Auditeur *in re* Anonymous Letters, next morning at 8 A.M." I prepared to go to Berlin, where all such examinations take place, by an early train, and was not surprised to find the court-yard gay with the equipages of my colleagues and numerous other Court officials about to embark on the same errand. Together we made up quite a party, filling all available first-class railway carriages, and the Berliners, seeing us drive down the Linden an hour later, must have wondered at the sudden invasion, though surely no one suspected that all these elegantly-dressed women, these gentlemen in showy uniforms and beribboned dress-coats, had left their luxurious couches at an unearthly hour to answer the summons of the modern *Vehme*.

A *Vehmgericht* indeed, secret, unlawful, tyrannical. We will treat of it later on in the chapters devoted to the nastiest Court intrigue of modern times, the anonymous letter scandal. For the present, it will suffice to say that

the judicial inquiries neither yielded the name of the person who revealed the Emperor's secret, nor afforded the least hint as to his or her identity.

After this excursion into the realms of high politics, a *milieu* which I meant to avoid in these papers, but whose allurements I cannot escape at all times, we will return to the subject: the Kaiser as a financier.

The preceding pages have pictured William to us seriously concerned about the light-hearted fashion with which a royal relative seemed to squander a dozen or more twenty-mark pieces, and simultaneously calling for an outlay of from ten to twenty millions to promote some useless building extravagances. Again, we have observed how he reduced his modest Christmas charity fund two-thirds, while at about the same time Prince Hohenlohe's salary was *increased* in equal proportion. In both instances William robbed the poor (or intended robbing them), to the advantage of the enormously wealthy, first of a hundred and forty-three marks, the second time of one hundred thousand marks; twice in succession he was guilty of actions that, as pointed out, bespeak at once hard-heartedness, egotism, and the lack of certain mental faculties.

And worst of all, these are not isolated cases, the results of caprice or ill-temper; but all through the public and private life of the Emperor confusion in matters of finance is noticeable, like the proverbial red thread in the British marine, or red tape in our own government affairs.

Who has not read of William's thundering philippics against luxury in the officers' corps of the army? "The Prussian lieutenant, captain, and colonel must find supreme satisfaction in a frugal life. To live above one's income is the source of all social evil. Only the commanding generals have 'duties of representation' to fulfil, and their Excellencies shall not spend more for the purpose than the

state appropriation permits," are stock phrases of his pronunciamentos issued from time to time. And as a variation of the stories on patched Hohenzollern trousers, the official telegraph bureau never fails to add the interesting information that the chief war-lord suffers the red facings of his uniform to be renewed several times before he throws away a coat.

Such is the theoretical side of the question; now to the practical.

In order to see whether his commands are strictly obeyed, the Kaiser invites himself to breakfast at the casino of some regiment every little while, announcing that he will pay ten marks for his and his suite's entertainment, not a penny more.

Now, the managers of these institutions know that His Majesty has his preferences as to wines and victuals, and the imperial Court-marshal is only too ready to enumerate them to the anxious. So French champagne of the highest grade, costly Rhine wines and Burgundy, imported cordials and cognacs, are bought, also game and fresh sea-food, which latter is a luxury with us. Furthermore, the exterior and interior of the club building are decorated, and often partly renovated, "and when, after all these preparations, the lavish outlay made, the imperial master departs with his corporal's guard of attendants" (when he has to pay for them he never brings more than half a dozen gentlemen), "and, on taking leave, remarks, with self-satisfied emphasis: 'You see, my dear colonel, ten marks is quite enough for anybody to spend on his stomach; I have had a very good breakfast' (or dinner), 'indeed, for that amount at your house,' you should study the faces of the subaltern officers," say the Kaiser's adjutants. "Count Eulenburg," they argue to themselves, "will send the governing board sixty or seventy marks within the next three months to pay for the exact

number of seats occupied by the imperial party, while we poor devils will have to pay for the Piper, or Roederer, and the other delicacies, out of our monthly pittance next week."

As a matter of fact, it costs a regimental mess from five hundred to fifteen hundred marks every time the war-lord tries its ten-marks' menu (according to the decorations and renovations deemed necessary), and the officers have to make up the difference. There have been times when the pleasure of feasting the sovereign cost the lieutenants of the Potsdam garrison one-tenth part of their pay for several months in succession, and when the uniformed *garçons* of these pretty young fellows had to go without their more than modest wage in consequence. But that is not all. The Kaiser's adjutants report from time to time stories of wrecked lives,—lives of army men who were lured upon the path that killeth, by the all-highest example, or in consequence of William's casino visitations.

It is a mistake to think that the majority of officers serving in the Prussian Guards are wealthy men; a good many are sons of high officials, endowed with mighty titles joined to a diminutive salary, who can give their boys but very scant assistance. Of course, these handicapped *nonages* desire to shine with the rest, and working, as it were, under the eyes of the imperial chief, endeavor to attract his attention. Now, there is only one way for a subaltern officer to secure this boon under William II, viz.: to dress smartly, for the Emperor is known to pick the best-accoutred man out of a hundred any time.

But if one aspires to be the Beau Brummel of the ball-room, the hunting-field, the club, the drill and parade grounds, credit with the regimental wardrobe-master is soon exhausted. Tailors demanding enormous profits as an offset against the risks involved have to be employed,

and from them to the "Jew" is but one step. According to this recipe, Count von R——, a dashing Rittmeister of the Body Hussars, was ruined, and Herr von L——, of the First Guards, kept him company, with hundreds of others of lesser note.

Herr von L——'s mother, widow of a privy councillor, who made her son a yearly allowance, besides keeping a family of several unmarried daughters, out of a pension of forty-five hundred marks, came to me in the fall of 1896, requesting an audience of Her Majesty, and when, according to instructions, I inquired after the nature of her business with my mistress, she confessed, to my utter consternation, that she intended to petition the Empress to use her influence toward keeping the Kaiser away from the military casinos. Of course, to let Madame von L—— come near Auguste Victoria was entirely out of the question under the circumstances; but while, as a lady of the Court, I did my best to dissuade her from her purpose, as a woman, I could not close my ears to that poor mother's arguments.

"My son's pay," she said, "amounted, as you probably know, to one hundred and seventy-five marks per month, of which all but forty marks were deducted for wardrobe account, representation and benefit funds, board and lodging, etc. Out of these forty marks and half as much again—my own modest contribution—Walter had to pay for his suppers, his tobacco, his car-fare, his amusements and incidentals, and, though it was hard work, he managed to keep within his income until His Majesty began to invite himself to the casino. After the Kaiser's first visit, my boy had to contribute fifteen marks toward the cost of the entertainment, and, to reimburse himself, borrowed a double gold crown from a comrade. In the course of the next month, His Majesty repeated his costly visit, and my boy was bled a second time. Then, after paying his

comrade, he retained just five marks out of his pay, while a month of hunger and humiliation was staring him in the face! Soon afterward, Walter found himself struggling in the clutches of the usurer, and within six months" (they have not much patience with us penniless bureaucrats) "his disgrace was gazetted. And believe me," added the broken-hearted mother, "my son's case is not an exceptional one; other promising young lives have been wrecked in the same way, and the ruin of hundreds of officers who judge the commanding chief by his deeds rather than by his words is but a question of time.

"For their sake, for the sake of their mothers and sisters," concluded Madame von L——, earnestly, "I am seeking audience with the Empress. I want to throw myself at Her Majesty's feet, picturing to her the perils to which our sons are exposed by coming into personal contact with the Kaiser. I will say to her: 'His Majesty is certainly actuated by the highest motives, but the splendor of his presence, the gorgeousness of the entertainments provided for him, are apt to befool ambitious young men by deceiving them as to their own insignificance, and by lightening their sense of the responsibilities they owe to themselves, their family, and their country.'"

In this connection, an observation by General von Kessel, then commander of the First Guards, deserves mention. "If His Majesty wants to see his officers well dressed, he should stop eating them out of pocket-money at their casinos. They cannot afford to play the host and pay their tailors at the same time," said the dashing adjutant when the imperial party returned from the manœuvres in the early fall of 1895. Herr von Kessel referred to His Majesty's criticism of the dress of certain officers of the Breslau Cuirassiers, a body of troopers from whom William demands hospitality on all occasions.

In February, 1897, I had the honor of receiving the Princess Frederick Charles of Prussia at the Berlin Schloss, Her Royal Highness calling during the Empress's absence. She was delighted to find everybody out. "I came to speak to their Majesties with respect to the anniversary" (the festivities in honor of the late Kaiser Wilhelm's one hundredth birthday), she said; "the letter of invitation prescribes costumes of the end of the eighteenth century, and I desired to explain to His Majesty why I cannot comply with such a request. To Your Ladyship I mention the true reason without hesitation, but, of course, it would have been painful to me to plead poverty to my nephew, he is so hard of comprehension" (*begriffsstutzig*) "in such matters. However, if the truth must be told, I am not rich enough by far to spend ten thousand marks on a costume serviceable for one occasion only, and, consequently, must decline to attend, much as I regret it, unless the Kaiser permits me to appear in the regulation ball-dress."

When I delivered this message to His Majesty, he scanned my face for a second or two in blank amazement as if he thought I was joking. Then he laughed. "Absurd!" he cried, "a Princess of Prussia unable to buy a few frocks! I see Madame, my aunt, is getting to be a niggard in her old age. But she must have her will; my Herr[1] grandfather was always very fond of the Princess, and we cannot do without her on this occasion."

During a reception held at the Schloss, on the evening of the same day, Princess Radziwill spoke of the great difficulties that many army officers, invited to the festivities, experienced to procure the necessary costumes.

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[1] The Kaiser never fails to preface references to his grandfather or his father by the appellation of "*Herr*."

"These gentlemen have had a month's time to prepare for my pageant, and I would advise none to be at all laggard in complying with my commands," said the Kaiser, haughtily. "If there are not enough tailors and embroiderers in Berlin, the work can be sent to other cities."

"With Your Majesty's permission, it is not the lack of hands and needles, but the scarcity of 'spondulicks,' or as Her Royal Highness, Your Majesty's sister, says,—'mint-drops,' that interferes. A great many of the younger officers, especially, can ill afford to spend six to seven hundred marks on a uniform that becomes absolutely useless after a few hours' wear."

"And where did Your Grace acquire all this valuable information," resumed the Kaiser, bowing formally and accentuating each word with a semi-sarcastic sneer.

"Anywhere, everywhere! They talk of nothing else in the *salons* and clubs." Princess Marie's French blood was up. "I felt like repeating to him what Pauline Metternich told the Empress Eugenie: 'I was born a grand dame, and I allow no one to *ironyze* me,'" she said, afterward, to Countess Brockdorff, who remonstrated with her for losing her temper.

His Majesty merely shrugged his shoulders at the Princess's blunt speech. "If it is necessary to clothe my guests, as well as to feed them, I will appropriate twenty thousand marks to help your impecunious friends to pay for their costumes," he said, and at once changed the subject. The promise had, however, been heard by everybody in the assemblage, and as all of us numbered at least one poor relative or friend among the four hundred officers commanded to the festival, it is not strange that the affair gained wide publicity. The news seemed to spread throughout Berlin and Potsdam like a piece of local intelligence

heralded in all the penny-dreadfuls. On the strength of it, the young roués of the Union Club doubled their stakes, and, the same night, "William-the-Bountiful's" health was drunk in numberless mess-rooms and beer-halls by youthful members of the aristocracy and army men whose greatest care had suddenly and unexpectedly been lifted off their shoulders by the Kaiser's words,—lifted to descend again, its weight doubled by chagrin and disappointment, in the course of a few weeks, for, to quote one of His Majesty's nephews, the heir presumptive to a tiny throne, "the twenty thousand marks' pledge proved to be an illusion, if not something worse,—a snare! Being assiduously published by the Kaiser's *entourage* and members of the Court, it served its purpose admirably.

"With reimbursement guaranteed, as they thought, the officers commanded to the *tableaux vivants* spared no expense in their costuming. The most magnificent silks and velvets, the costliest gold and silver embroidery, were worn by everybody, rich and poor. 'We don't mind paying a couple of hundred marks ourselves in excess of the Kaiser's allowance,' argued these whole-souled young men.

"The result was the happiest—for William: a display gorgeous and luxurious far above expectations. And when it was over, the Emperor expressed his all-highest satisfaction, and went—hunting. He had seemingly forgotten about the twenty thousand marks, and no one dared remind him of his promise."

As Lord Burghley said to Queen Elizabeth: "Those who would make tools of Princes are the tools themselves!"

Court and society had not yet ceased talking of this exhibition of bad faith, when the Kaiser startled the whole country by another incident bearing on finance to a certain extent. As his brother Henry was about to embark for the Queen's Jubilee in the man-of-war Koenig Wilhelm,

His Majesty sent him a despatch expressing regret that he had no better ship to give him, "because those unpatriotic scamps in the Reichstag refused me the necessary funds,"—these being the same "scamps," by the way, who consented to increase the regular naval budget fifty per cent. during the first seven years of William's reign, besides granting two hundred and seventy-nine millions of marks' worth of extraordinary marine credits.

Again that confusion as to monetary matters, of which we have already had numerous startling examples. "Whether you place the nought before or after the figure, it's all the same to His Majesty," said Prince Stolberg. The Reichstag, permitting the naval budget to swell from twenty-seven millions per annum under William I to fifty-five millions under William II, suffers the ignominy of a public scolding, exactly as if its members had decreed sweeping reductions instead.

There was a great deal of speculation in the public prints and in political circles as to the authenticity of the despatch quoted, and the majority of courtiers even inclined at first to the belief that Prince Henry had overstepped his authority when he read the imperial message before his officers and thereby caused its publication, for the Prince, though tolerably good-natured and not bright, has the reputation of a mischief-maker, and it would be just like him to set parliament by the ears at his brother's expense if there was the slightest warrant for doing so.

However, one of the Kaiser's adjutants told me at least a week before the scandal became public that His Majesty had promised himself and them a "*kladderadatsch*" (a great hullabaloo) "previous to his brother's sailing," without intimating, however, in any way, wherein the hubbub would consist. Of course, that exonerates Prince Henry; His Royal Highness evidently followed orders, "performed his

damned duty," as they say in Prussia; but, granted the Kaiser created this opportunity for insulting the Reichstag in a moment of anger, that would not explain the several palpable inconsistencies of his message,—the setting aside of all parliament has done for his marine plans; the nonsense of the assumption that an appropriation made in January or February would permit the placing in service of a battle-ship, or a number of them, one or two months later; and, thirdly, the obvious untruth that a better ship was not available.

I will pass over the first-mentioned contradictions of well-known facts to avoid repeating suggestions of a pathological nature; number two comes under the same heading, considering that this idle talk emanated from a man of affairs, well schooled in naval matters. The third point is the most interesting, because the most novel.

The Emperor's assertion that the Koenig Wilhelm was the only serviceable vessel at his disposal I shall not attempt to deny, as the Kiel and Wilhelmshaven shipping lists prove it utterly false and unwarrantable, but I shall recall a conversation between the Kaiser and little Prince Adalbert that occurred a month or so previous to the despatch scandal. Young Adalbert, despite his tender years, is a lieutenant in the marine, and his governor has taught him to exhibit interest in naval matters on all possible occasions. So, when he heard his father speak of "Uncle Henry's" forthcoming trip to "Grandma Victoria," he said, quickly: "Will you let uncle have the Hohenzollern?"

The Kaiser, who had been very pleasant at luncheon, and whose humor had continued in a happy mood while we were sipping our coffee in the *Tassen Zimmer*, suddenly changed his tone. Assuming the style of a severe preceptor, he made the frightened boy leave his mother's knee and "stand at attention."

"Under which title does the Hohenzollern rank in the marine lists?" he demanded.

"His Majesty's Aviso, the yacht Hohenzollern, at the Kaiser's exclusive disposal," reported the tiny lieutenant.

"Well, then," said the Emperor, "understand, sir, no subject shall assume the Kaiser's privileges."

His Majesty had spoken so severely and with such excessive emphasis that the little Prince became frightened and had to be conducted from the room, while the small assemblage of officials and guests sat about dispirited, a feeling of unrest having replaced the previous joviality.

"No subject shall assume the Kaiser's privileges,"—it was more than a rebuke; it was a declaration: Everything for William, the best, the most expensive that money can buy, a glut of everything, and—as in the days of Louis XIV—if there be anything left after the king had his innings, well and good, the rest may come in for their share. Under *le roy Soleil,* "the rest" stood for the government of France; at the Berlin Court, it means the Empress, the children, the royal relatives, and the Court generally.

I shall yet have occasion to speak at length upon the finance of this royal establishment; may it suffice to say here that there are no appropriations for the different sections of the household which are not subject to drafts by the imperial master. Prince Stolberg, who ought to know, once ventured the opinion: "The Kaiser would as lief gobble up our pension or salary appropriations as ——"

"As the Guelph Fund?" inquired Duke Günther.

"Your Highness is pleased to jest," replied the grand-master, quickly, and then, changing his tone to one of semi-raillery, he continued: "Forty-eight millions of marks! No one could spend such an amount."

"Oh, yes, my brother-in-law could," laughed the Duke, with a mysterious air.

The above conversation, reported to me by an ear-witness, took place in May, 1894, during the festivities attending the prize-shooting of the officers of the Second Guards, in Potsdam, and this was, to my knowledge, the second time Günther of Schleswig brought up the matter of the Guelph Fund.

The Guelph Fund represents the sequestrated fortune of King George of Hannover, or his heir, the Duke of Cumberland, and its history is interesting. After annexing the Kingdom of Hannover in the summer of 1866, Prussia restored their private fortune to the deposed Guelphs by the convention of September 29, 1867, but there was a string, or rather a steel cable, attached to this apparently voluntary act of restitution. Pointing out that the poor blind man whom he had vanquished might utilize his money to raise an army against victorious Prussia, Bismarck, with the consent of the Diet, sequestrated the private property of the royal Hannoverians a second time, pleading that its annual interest was needed to ward off the Guelph party's secret intrigues and stratagems in the German and foreign press.

So the Guelph Fund became the Reptile Fund,—a golden trough out of which the friends of the government, or its leading men, fed for twenty-six years *ad libitum*,[1] there being no public accounting, the Chancellor laying a list of disbursements before His Majesty at the end of each year, after which act the receipts were destroyed.

When, a year or so after Bismarck's dismissal, the Kaiser desired to re-establish agreeable relations with Queen Victoria, he instructed Caprivi to offer restoration of the Guelph Fund on condition that the Duke of Cumberland formally

[1] Among other things, the Duke of Cumberland was made to pay the debts of Minister von Boetticher's father-in-law.

renounced his rights to the crown. The stipulation was accepted,—to William's great surprise, it is said,—but as an offset, the fatal string was brought into play a second time, and not the fortune itself; its annual interest only was handed over to His Royal Highness at Gmunden. Court gossip fixes upon the Kaiser's unwillingness to give up so large a fortune to which he might have recourse occasionally (his own inheritance of forty million marks having been squandered within four years after his father's death) as the principal cause of this renewed breach of faith, but, quite naturally, no one has ever been able to verify this statement. Nor do I know of a person who succeeded in tracing even a solitary million on its way to the Kaiser's pockets from the Wilhelmsplatz or Festungsgraben, where the Ministries of Finance for the Reich and Prussia are located. The only parties in possession of the true facts are, besides the Emperor, Count Caprivi, Prince Hohenlohe, Herr von Miquel, Minister of Finance, and Baron Wedell, Minister of the Royal House, and neither of these gentlemen is in the habit of giving away his master's secrets to ladies of the Court. Duke Günther, on the other hand, if his allusions are not attempts at beating about the bush in the hope of entrapping the game he is after, may have got an inkling of the affair through his sister, the Empress, who can keep nothing from him, or from his relatives in Vienna, notably the Princess Philip of Coburg, who in her turn probably received the news from the Duke of Cumberland himself, though the latter's authority might well be questioned, unless it grounds upon exact data given out at Marlborough House. The heir to the English crown, you must know, sometimes has earlier and closer information about matters concerning the Berlin Court than anybody connected with it, for he is, above all, the confidant of the Empress

Frederick, while the Princess keeps him posted on everything that transpires at the Courts of St. Petersburg, Copenhagen, and Athens, those centres of anti-Prussian, if not anti-Wilhelm, politics. Under these circumstances, the feeling of self-satisfied prognostication that swelled the bosom of the knowing ones may well be imagined, when, in the spring of 1897 (almost three years after the reported talk between Duke Günther and Prince Stolberg), the following story went the rounds at the Neues Palais:

The Prince of Wales, it was whispered, had written a letter to King George informing him that the Kaiser *gulped* down (that was the word employed) the whole of the Guelph Fund, advising his brother-in-law at the same time to use the information as he saw fit (Greece was then hard pushed by William), but, unfortunately, "Uncle Bertie," instead of sending it to Athens direct, forwarded his missive to Copenhagen for approval by his mother-in-law, and Queen Louise, most innocently you may be sure, caused the noble conspiracy to leak out. For, in a burst of confidence, Her Majesty showed the letter to Princess Valdemar, the same sprightly daughter of La Belle France who stirred up the imbroglio between Bismarck and Czar Alexander not so many years ago.

That Marie d'Orleans-Bourbon, on her part, was unable to constrain her triumph at the hope of seeing Germany's Kaiser humiliated, is, perhaps, not to be wondered at, for Her Royal Highness detests the Emperor as heartily as she adores France. So, with true feminine acumen, she sat down and telegraphed the sweet morsel broadcast to all royal Wilhelm-haters, or Princes that she considered sympathizers, and all wished the undertaking Godspeed,—all except Cousin Ferdinand of Bulgaria. This queer individual, eager to oblige the Kaiser, is said to have betrayed

the confidence reposed in him, and informed His Majesty, hoping thereby to gain William's eternal gratitude.

The rest is soon told. William's threat to openly place himself on the Sultan's side, conveyed in a personal letter to King Christian, which, strange to say, was countersigned by Prince Hohenlohe, made the would-be conspirators scatter in all directions, and immediately upon its receipt at the Danish Court, Albert Edward's message to the King of the Hellenes was given to the flames in the presence of the German Minister. Thereupon the diplomatic side of the incident was declared closed, yet to his Uncle Bertie the Kaiser is said to have written a furious letter intimating that he would demand a personal explanation from him during his—the Prince's—summer visit to Homburg,—a menace which, apparently, did not disturb His Royal Highness in the least, for, instead of a direct reply, there arrived at the Neues Palais, a week or ten days later, a newspaper clipping, under seal of Marlborough House, announcing that in the coming season His Royal Highness intended to take the waters of Marienburg; and on the margin was scribbled in German an inelegant, but whole-souled, invitation to the imperial nephew, the like of which has once before been extended to a German Emperor, namely, by Goetz von Berlichingen, who answered Maximilian the First's order to surrender in the same vulgar fashion, while of modern kings the late Victor Emanuel is said to have been liberal with the phrase, as the following anecdote shows:

After buying a pair of braces at a Paris haberdasher's, he was treated to the inevitable localism: "*Et avec ça, Monsieur?*" (What next, sir?)

"*Avec ça,*" replied the King, who had been importuned to death by tradesmen that morning,—"*avec ça, je suspends mon pantalon et vous* ——"

The Guelph Fund story, as intimated, is palace gossip, no more, no less,—gossip that originates with the ladies and gentlemen in attendance upon their Majesties, no one knows exactly how. Countess B—— happens to learn of an important secret event through Her Majesty's ill-temper or confidences, and, again, a hint may be dropped at dinner or supper *coram nobis* by the Kaiser himself, whose tongue not unfrequently runs away with his head. To-day one of the Emperor's adjutants may have a good story to relate that, without involving a breach of faith on the gentleman's part, gives the key to a perplexing situation, while letters from other courts, the tattle of princely visitors, correspondence of high aristocrats or statesmen, a ministerial crisis, a sudden lapse in the routine of royal employment, as a visit postponed or a "headache to order," complete the chain of evidence that linked together of its own accord, as it were, and in the end reveals hidden springs of action and private views and motives of individuals affording a better analysis of the minds of historic personages than a whole library of ordinary contemporaneous accounts, written by mere outside spectators, who faithfully copied each other.

I repeat, I cannot vouch for the truth of the Guelph Fund report as I do for other strange facts in these volumes that came under my personal observation, for all the evidence I was able to collect on that point is of the hearsay variety,—and there are very good reasons why this should be so; but I have, besides, one strong bit of circumstantial evidence: Prince Hohenlohe has been holding office against his will for three years or longer because he cannot step out until the Guelph Fund affair is settled, that is, until the capital of that great fortune is once more intact. This I have from an authoritative source.

We now return to the Koenig Wilhelm despatch. While the press of the entire world was engaged in a heated

discussion as to the genuineness or the apocryphal character of the message, His Majesty enjoyed himself hugely at the commotion he had caused.

"*Der Hieb hat gesessen*" (that was a blow from the shoulder), are words he addressed to every visitor at Court in those days, without prefacing his extraordinary remark by even an allusion to the matter he had in mind. And to General von Buddenbrock, the same gentleman whose hussars were decimated at Josefstadt (in 1866) by Prussian batteries, he said: "Of course the telegram is authentic. Why should I not tell my brother what I think of those scamps? Though I care not to abuse them face to face when they are guests at my house, I propose to speak my mind privately," and, anticipating His Excellency's question, whether the publication had been intentional or not, he continued: "I am right glad, too, my brother made use of my words promptly and without sentimental ado."

Here we have almost as many contradictions as sentences: Personally His Majesty does not want to insult the Reichstag; his denunciations were of a private nature, and he wishes them proclaimed from the housetops! Whether such a state of mind indicates merely morbid impulsiveness, or a dangerous confusion of sentiments and ideas, is a question I asked of a renowned medical professor of the Berlin University, one of the late Emperor's physicians, who occasionally visits the Schloss. The great man weighed the matter in his mind for a few moments, and then replied, evasively:

"One riddle is worth another, Madame la Comtesse. I am told that on the day of Princess Victoria, the present Empress's, ceremonious entry into the capital,[1] the Kaiser, then Prince William, marched his battalion of infantry from Potsdam to Berlin (a distance of twenty miles) for the avowed

[1] February 26, 1881.

The Royal Palace in Berlin

purpose of startling his bride by his prowess. On the road, many of the soldiers became exhausted, but the captain, who was on horseback, as a matter of course, arrived in first-class condition, and ever since has been boasting of this particular feat,—'a *par force* march on the wedding eve.' Now, as a matter of fact, William did not walk ten paces on that occasion, and, furthermore, the thing came off fully twenty-four hours before his bride's garter was distributed. The Kaiser's boast of 'planting his victorious standard upon the fortress after a Sheridan's ride,' is, therefore, as unwarrantable as it is ridiculous. Still, this is one of his stock anecdotes which he relates at all weddings graced by the imperial presence.

"In this case," concluded the great physician, "impulsiveness, the spontaneous desire to do something extraordinary, doubtless led to the conception of the idea,—the rest is utter confusion."

Certain members of the opposition have characterized the Kaiser's action (in June, 1897) of ordering the Königsberg pioneers to make for him a number of improvements in Theerbude forest by building cottages and sheds as "confounding mine and thine," and "as malfeasance worthy of a satrap who recognizes no distinction between the state's and his own individual resources;" but this exploit, though calling in question his boasted concern for the working-classes, did His Majesty less harm with the Germans than his refusal, a month or so after the awful holocaust of royal and aristocratic women at the Paris Bazaar, to extend a helping hand to the victims of the great floods in Würtemberg. For the foreigners "his" *Dispositionsfond* yielded promptly a four-nought contribution, together with a hysterical telegram of condolence; the South German allies, who contribute toward the fund, got neither money nor sympathy, and in consequence the mail

of both their Majesties was again heavy with anonymous letters, some of them illustrated.

Such caricatures! Among others was a cartoon, in colors, that represented the Kaiser kneeling before the bed of Madame la République, and pouring gold into her naked lap out of a bag marked "The *Reich's Dispositions-fond* for the Benefit of German Veterans, Widows, and Orphans," and almost every one of the nameless correspondents pointed out that the Emperor had never been guilty of a generous act lacking in theatrical possibilities. Still, the worst feature of these letters was their origin. They were evidently not of the scandal-mongering sort, of which mention has been made, but expressions of righteous indignation, of honest opinion, forced to anonymity by the prevailing draconic laws against *lèse majesté*.

"What a blessing these people calculate but one-half of the truth," I thought, when the Empress turned some of the epistles and cartoons over to me, that I might help her shudder "at a nation's ingratitude." If, like myself, they had heard William say, after mailing "his" ten-thousand-franc check—their money—to the French capital: "That brings me nearer to Paris a hundred miles; if such opportunities continue, they will send a special train to Berlin to carry me to their Exposition," the rage of these critics might have assumed a more dangerous form than the one adopted.

There is, after all, more method in the secrecy that hedges round a throne, and likewise a greater amount of shrewd circumspection in the publicity accorded to a King's words and actions by paid and voluntary scribes, than most people imagine. In May, 1897, for instance, all the newspapers commented upon some rather trite remarks the Kaiser had made in Wiesbaden about so-called charity bazaars, "whose receipts are eaten up by the cost of the entertainment, and where the poor are cheated." These

observations were heralded as something entirely new, and when, a month or so afterward, the Empress announced a flower corso for the benefit of the Potsdam "*Krippe*," and invited society on condition that, in obedience to His Majesty's wishes, the decorations be less lavish than usual, while the money thus saved be handed over for the charitable object in view, Court-marshal Count Eulenburg, as well as we ladies, who have more or less to do with the Kaiserin's toilet, expected to receive orders to keep the preparations for the festival within certain limits. But the very opposite happened. Auguste Victoria selected the costliest of all the Vienna toilets proposed, a superb cream-colored gown, and instead of going out in two coaches, as formerly, four were placed into service for the royal family, not counting those of the Court-marshals, equerries, chamberlains, and dames of the palace.

At the corso, which was held in Potsdam, near the "Russian colony," Her Majesty's carriage, containing, besides herself, Prince Joachim and her little daughter, was nearly hidden under a load of Maréchal Niel roses, imported from France and Holland at a tremendous outlay; the Princes Adalbert, Augustus Wilhelm, and Oscar rode in a landau lavishly decorated with white carnations, the Crown Prince and Prince Eitel Fritz in a phaeton made gay by ten thousand red pinks and ribbons, and the floral embellishments of the Kaiser's coach represented the colors of Schleswig-Holstein.

The other royal and aristocratic participants in the pageant had likewise taken care to shine by sovereign disregard of the imperial injunction against extravagance, but to their credit it must be said that nearly all of them sent very considerable sums to the "*Krippe*" next day, "savings out of our decoration fund," as their perfumed missives to the august lady-protector modestly declared.

And their Majesties? William and his Queen had no occasion to remember their high-sounding proclamations, seeing that a purveyor's bill of several thousand marks for the embellishment of the royal carriages was staring in their faces. Heretofore royal gardeners had attended to the corso decorations, there being always an abundance of flowers in our parks and hot-houses; but, with that contrariness which now and again distinguishes the Kaiser's actions, he ordered that the work be intrusted to a high-priced Berlin florist, at the very instant when saving was the prime object of the hour.

Hence tears and lamentations in the Empress's apartments, most unroyal frowns on the Kaiser's brow, while the papers were echoing both Majesties' praises for arranging charity entertainments, "every participant of which contributes to the benefit."

The "*Krippe*" got nothing from the Neues Palais that season, but what matters that so long as the press applauds?

CHAPTER X

Baron von Poellnitz, chronicler of two centuries, or the most interesting part of them (the last decade of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth), the scamp, gamester, adventurer, spy, roué, libertine, in short, past-master of all vices that distinguished the courtiers of the Orleans Regency, and the times of one Frederick William and two Fredericks of Prussia,—Poellnitz, whom serious historians detest, but cannot afford to neglect,—describes, in one of his letters, a statue which formerly decorated one of the inner court-yards of the Berlin Schloss,—Madame Borussia embracing a horse.

"This lady," says the disciple of Duchesse la Palatine's plain-speaking school, "became the foremother of the Hohenzollerns, though she was never known to have commerce with Burchard de Zolorin, their reputed male ancestor. Do you wonder that, under the circumstances, our sovereigns are animal every inch, insensitive to the appeal of the weak, regardless of the other sex except for purposes of procreation, stubborn, proud and aggressive like stallions, roaring of voice, uncompanionable, gluttonous?"

And, for example, he cites a cabinet order by Frederick William, admonishing all subjects "whom the King may honor by taking meals at their houses" to place in the room adjoining the dining-hall "a heap of straw, a lighted candle, wash-basin, towel, and soap." Of another royal Hohenzollern, who was in the habit of visiting the lower

order of mankind,—Frederick William II, the Fat,—it is reported that he did not stand on much ceremony provided there was some novelty in the line of "a rag, a bone, and a hank of hair," and an abundance of eating and drinking. The first three kings of the present century bore out the charges of unsociableness and pride by accepting invitations from uncrowned heads but rarely; William, however, has revived the old royal custom of going the round of the palaces and country residences of the nation's great, and, in consequence, Poellnitz's satire, which somebody has just discovered in the Charlottenburg Archives,[1] is to-day eminently popular in our so-called "polite" circles.

While His Majesty inflicts his costly presence upon the nobles and rich officials of Berlin and Potsdam according to his whims and preferences for society, and following the course of such events as birthdays, weddings, house-warmings, and similar domestic affairs in the families of the aristocracy, his visits to the hunting-grounds of friends in all parts of Germany are matters of routine, as he looks upon the utilization of the country's preserves as a regalism in the old feudal sense, as his sovereign right. Whoever, be he prince or private, asks the Kaiser to a shooting once, is sure of receiving, at the opening of the next season, a letter from the Court-marshal's office announcing that His Majesty will be graciously pleased to decimate his game on such and such days, unless, indeed, the first hunt was entirely unproductive.

The meets of royalty do not interest us here; since the author of "Antimacchiavell" summoned the heavy artillery

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[1] Poellnitz wrote "Memoirs of the Court of Frederick William I," which that King's son, Frederick the Great, confiscated and destroyed in part, at least. His other work, "Memoirs and Observations of My Travels," was republished thirty years ago.

of his wit and terrible wrath against "this physical pleasure, which often undermines health without ever improving the mind,"—"if you say the old patriarchs were devoted to the chase, and therefore hunting must be respectable, I make answer that the old patriarchs slept with their sisters; but has that made incest honorable?" reasons the philosopher of Sans Souci,—since the days of Neuruppin and Wustershausen royal hunts have not improved; on the contrary, there is a dull sameness about them that makes this form of sport the reverse of attractive. The Kaiser's jolly shooting jaunts with the great lords, on the other hand, yield many engaging sights and characteristic episodes. His Majesty's annual programme for the chase at home and abroad is as follows:

As the customary Court festivities forbid longer journeys, the Kaiser utilizes the first months of the year to repay the compliments of his hunting friends all over the country, and his master of the hounds issues liberal invitations for all sorts of meets, on foot and on horse, to be held in the neighborhood of Berlin and Potsdam where pheasants, ducks, hare, and deer abound in the royal preserves.

In April, William helps the Grand Dukes of Saxe and Baden to kill woodcock; and if Count Schlitz, known as the husband of one of the most beautiful women of Germany, finds a good crop of these rare birds on his Hesse domains, he never fails to ask William to gather additional trophies for Her Majesty's hats and boas.

In May, the Kaiser goes to Proeckelwitz and Schlobitten to relieve Count Richard zu Dohna of roebucks; partridges he shoots at Count Finkenstein's, in Madlitz, and then follows, usually, an excursion to Styria, where either the Emperor of Austria, or one of the many Archdukes, places tempting preserves at the imperial Nimrod's disposal.

The rut of hart calls the Kaiser to Rominton, East Prussia, in September; the season in the Schorfheide, nearer home, comes next, and then opens the chase for red deer generally, which the Kaiser follows in every nook and corner of his Empire, in his own forests, and on the domains of the noble and industrial barons. As an annual customer, he is registered at Pless, where Prince Henry XI sometimes allows him to hunt one or two of the remaining ure-oxen; at Wirschowitz, the estate of Count Hochberg; at Barby, where Amtsrath von Dietze offers splendid hospitality; at Count Philip Eulenberg's seat in Liebenberg, and at Neugattersleben, where Chamberlain von Alvensleben does the honors.

All these gentlemen are William's personal friends, though only two are in the inner circle, Richard Dohna and Philip Eulenburg,—the first by reason of his joviality, the other because he is, besides a good story-teller and entertainer, an assenter of the first order, and a person such as every absolute king needs at his elbow for certain work at certain times. True, William is not an autocrat, though he tries hard to be, and Count "Philli's" duties are of the most vacillating character; but these details do not alter His Lordship's position, which is eminently that of the royal favorite of by-gone days, who made and unmade men during a day's hunting, while—the preferred one being a woman—"a night sufficed to destroy anybody, high or low, sell a province, or depopulate a city," as Lady Milford says in "Love and Intrigue."

Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter, German Minister in Copenhagen, is another imperial *intimus* of the favorite type, while Count Dohna and Chamberlain von Huelsen, in Wiesbaden, are mere cronies who, knowing the ins and outs of the Kaiser's character and forever studying his whims and knuckling to his idiosyncrasies, gradually

became part and parcel of his travelling equipage and shooting outfit, whose absence at any festive or joyful occasion would annoy William almost as much as if his valet had forgotten to pack his brushes or combs or slippers. This is not a simile of my own, if you please; I have it from the Kaiser, who often uses it when the papers criticise Count Philli's frequent absence from his ambassadorial post in Vienna with some such remark as: "he is not paid to dance attendance upon the Emperor," or, "if His Majesty wants a travelling companion, let him invite some useless goldstick, not an official who has certain duties to perform."

"Courtiers," said the Kaiser on one of these occasions, "are like the clothes I wear, dire necessities; they have their fixed places in my *entourage*, above which they seldom rise. Such men as Eulenburg and Kiderlen, on the other hand, are butter on the bread of our pleasure; as for the rest, one can get along without negligee attire, but it is mighty uncomfortable in the long run."

When His Majesty goes to a shooting, he seldom stays longer than two days, the cost of his entertainment being between forty and fifty thousand marks, and one need but glance at the preparations on the host's part to appreciate the enormity of the outlay, which, moreover, is vastly larger at the first visit. The country residences of our Prussian grandees, you must know, are, as a general thing, quite innocent of sanitary arrangements, and often several rooms must be entirely rebuilt and furnished with running water before His Majesty will set foot in the house. Now, an unsophisticated reader might think that to plead old-fashionedness would scare away William and save one's money, but that is a wild miscalculation. If the Emperor scents a full game-bag on any baronial domain, he will invite himself to the feast *sans phrase*, and not until all

arrangements have been completed, and when it is too late to raise objections of the nature intimated, does the Court-marshal put in the standing claims of his master: A bed-room similar in all respects as to size and appointments to the Kaiser's own chamber at home, brass bedstead, horse-hair mattress, an enormous wash-stand, windows and doors secured by endless numbers of curtains and *portières*, and—here comes the rub—a connecting-room with the latest paraphernalia of the bath.

"Mark Twain has written many funny things about the German and his tub, or the absence of the latter," said Court-marshal Count Eulenburg to me, after meeting the American humorist at a dinner given by General Verdy du Vernois in the winter of 1891; "but he could surpass himself if I were free to give him only part of the correspondence I have had with our nobility on the subject of providing adequate bathing requisites for His Majesty. How they struggle and twist and squirm against the introduction of this *novelty*, which, they claim, would destroy the harmonious appearance of rooms that for three hundred years were untouched by the mode. One gentleman, in the province of Prussia, tried to evade the obnoxious obligation by impudently suggesting that he dared not offer His Majesty a bath after one night's journey, as it involved the insinuation of excessive dirtiness on his guest's part.

"While I sympathize with many of His Majesty's hosts, who can ill afford to entertain the most luxurious monarch of the age," continued the good-natured grand-master, "I am as adamant as the proverbial *rocher de bronze* when asked to tolerate aristocratic principles of that sort. If the Kaiser's travels served no other purpose than that of promoting cleanliness, his time would be well spent."

Subscribed and agreed to, *Herr Graf*, but these so-called *novelties* are really the least costly items of an imperial

visit, even if Berlin plumbers have to be imported into remote corners of the kingdom to execute your commands. Luxurious bedroom furnishings, the carpeting throughout of spacious country residences, sometimes ordered if William honors one of his subjects in midwinter, are items of expenditure of far greater magnitude, though scarcely the beginning of the end.

I do not agree with a certain Pomeranian squire who complained that the Emperor's first visit cost him twenty thousand marks more than Prince Pless paid for the pleasure of harboring the sovereign because he had to build a carriage-road to the railway station, ten miles off,—that highway will endure and benefit coming generations when the Baron "and the proudest" (and costliest) "moment of his life" are long forgotten; but to force one's entertainer to provide a four-in-hand—one of the implied conditions of every royal visit—comes dangerously near sowing the seeds of extravagance.

And those Potemkin villages! That nothing may grate upon the imperial feelings, the *Herr Graf* or *Fuerst* compels his peasants to whitewash and paint farm-house and hovel for miles around and sometimes pays for the beautifying out of his own pocket. Furthermore, he must furnish greens and flags to decorate the streets, engage numerous torch-bearers to light up the highway on the eve of the arrival and during the nights of the visit, and employ four hundred to five hundred beaters, at the very least, a week or longer. For His Majesty is not content to shoot the game on his friend's domain; his host, if he loves his peace, will hire all the hare, deer, or roe for a dozen German miles in the neighborhood and let them be driven into his own preserves. Of course, the dislodged game does not remain voluntarily in its new environment, and must be kept from running away by continuous beating up; sometimes, too,

great numbers are trapped in other parts of the province and carried to and kept in thickets on the spot selected for the chase, to be released when the great slaughter is at its height.

While outside preparations of this kind eat up tens of thousands, those for the inner man are not less costly. The Kaiser seldom brings fewer than twenty gentlemen, and even more servants, all of whom must be lodged and fed and horsed, and do not forget that a royal flunky in a strange house pretends to be almost as much as his master. Treated *à la Kommiss*, after the barrack regimen at home, he impudently demands the best of everything when stopping elsewhere, and generally succeeds in obtaining it, as complaints on the host's part would lay him open to suspicions of nearness, an alternative he desires to avoid by all means.

That for the Emperor himself and his titled *entourage* nothing is too good that money can procure, goes without saying. The great caterers of Berlin and Paris send their choicest wares beforehand, all the delicacies of the season, and the next to follow; under the load of mighty barrels branded in many languages, groan the ancient cellar-beds of oaken beams, and mysterious bottles with dirty labels tell of old vintages and lynx-eyed connoisseurs, while the family cook, who is good enough all the year round, is dislodged to make room for experts in every known branch of culinary art, "lent" by the great hotels and world-famed restaurants of the capital.

And what says William to this splendid hospitality, this lavish, almost reckless, expenditure for his benefit?

If everything go off according to programme, if game be plentiful, the weather fine, his bath and the cooking better than at his own house, he will remark, on leaving: "Be assured, *gnädige Frau*," or —— (naming the host

without prefix of courtesy or title), "I have enjoyed myself exceedingly; and if one thing gave me more pleasure than the other, it was the fact that you made no fuss, asked the Kaiser to take pot-luck with you, so to speak. That is as it should be. Like *Eberhardt im Barte*, I desire to be free to visit my people without causing them the least trouble or expense."

But if weather or wind, the elements above or those below (in the kitchen), go against the imperial grain, if the populace's shouts of welcome do not seem hearty or loud enough, or if one of the other guests exhibits greater skill in bringing down game than the Emperor, William simply orders his carriage, drives back to the house, and goes to bed. That has happened in the course of years once or twice at each of the baronial seats enumerated, for, if one may say so without committing *crimen læsæ Majestatis*, there are still some things completely oblivious to His Majesty's claims of omnipotence,—game and guns; but the only time one of these accidents provoked grave political complications was in October, 1894, at Liebenberg.

In the midst of the ministerial crisis—involving Chancellor Count Caprivi and the President of the Prussian Ministry, Count Botho Eulenburg—which set in October 19, when Eulenburg had advocated a *coup d'état* in order to railroad through an arbitrary anti-revolutionary bill, and while everybody in the palace was depressed by the seriousness of the situation that stood out in black contrast to the external show of courtly splendor,—the festive dedication of one hundred and thirty-two flags on October 18, and the reception of the loyalists' delegation from East Prussia two days later,—in the midst of those exciting events, Her Majesty learned, on the morning of October 23, from her Kammerdiener, who had it from the Kaiser's valet, Herr Brachwitz, that the Emperor had reconsidered his decision

against going to Liebenberg, and would follow Count Philli's invitation at once, politics or no politics.

My mistress was consulting with Countess Brockdorff and myself whether it would be wise for her to go to the Emperor's study and, under some pretence or other, find out if any good news had developed over night, when the Kaiser rushed in. "I am off for Berlin," he said, "to have a talk with Caprivi, and then proceed to Liebenberg; you may expect me back late Thursday night."

"Will Count Botho be there too?" inquired Auguste Victoria, anxiously, for her enthusiasm for Caprivi had cooled off, and she would have been glad to contribute to his downfall if daring to mix in such matters unasked.

"No, no," said the Emperor; "he had better remain in obscurity for the present. Letting the *coup-d'état* cat out of the bag, as he did, was almost a crime under the circumstances."

The results of the impromptu visit to Wilhelm Strasse are well known; the Kaiser took sides with Caprivi on all points in dispute, and even authorized him to publish the fact in the semi-official papers. Then he went straightway to Liebenberg, Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter contributing to the enjoyment of the trip in his capacity of *raconteur*.

At Philli's seat, our grand-master told me afterward, His Majesty found assembled all the Eulenburgs except one:—Philip, the Ambassador; August, the Court-marshal; the commander of the Body Uhlans, and Major Count Eulenburg.

The supper was of the finest,—*mets favoris* galore, roast turkey and German cranberry sauce, saddle of roe, stewed cherries and cucumber salad, courses which the Emperor likes to eat *en bloc;* that is, having chopped the very tender meat with his knife-fork, he mixes it with the sweets,

potatoes, and greens into a hotch-potch and swallows with relish. "For dessert we had biscuit pudding with chocolate sauce; is there anything better in the wide, wide world?" asked Herr Saltzmann, the artist who paints the Kaiser's marine views and belongs to his round table, in speaking of the *Jagd-souper*.

And the entertainment that followed! The host in the weird dress of a Northern Skalde singing his self-composed airs that gave birth to the misnamed Ægir, and variegating the performance by branching off into French, German, and English couplets; Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter as *prestidigitateur*, with blackened face and hands, swallow-tail coat, and horsy pants, doing the absent Herr von Huelsen's specialties.

Saltzmann, as "lightning portraitist," finally pictured all the four Eulenburgs, enlarging upon their virtues and weaknesses, and, encouraged by William's applause, topped off the series by "Caprivi in distress." "But," shouted Herr von Kiderlen, "the family is not complete; where is His Excellency from the Linden?"[1]

And the Kaiser nodding assent, the artist added a clever caricature of the well-known cartoon: "*Bismarck Kommt*" (Bismarck is coming), exhibiting the hasty evacuation of the Reichstag at the entrance of Count Botho armed with a mace, emblem of imperial authority.

"Don't wipe that out!" cried the Kaiser when Saltzmann, after the manner of his craft, was about to apply the sponge; "I will telegraph Botho to attend us at tomorrow's *battue*, and in the evening we will spring this surprise on him and hear what he has to say."

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[1] No. 73 Unter den Linden, the palace of the Minister of the Interior; Eulenburg was at the time both Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior.

Half an hour later a mounted chasseur was galloping in the direction of Zehdenick to deposit not only the Kaiser's despatch, but divers messages of the other four Eulenburgs, at the telegraph office.

As characteristic of the tone that prevailed at the supper-table, one of the participants recalls some remarks of the Kaiser. Observing the elaborate menu, William shook his finger at Count Philli, and said: "This is far above the ten-mark limit, my good fellow;" and when pudding was served, he remarked: "Now I will bet you are after some favor; otherwise, why this *embarras* of *Leibgerichte?*" (favorite dishes).

Count Botho came, saw, and—was told to "get out of His Majesty's way." The chase had been "amateurishly arranged;" there was "no discipline in those confounded beaters," and "one could have better sport walking through the park of Sans Souci than on such preserves;" these and similar remarks greeted the new-comer, while the host and his friends wished themselves miles away.

There was, I am told by one of the witnesses, some truth in the Kaiser's criticisms; the two gun-chargers standing behind him often remained idle for three or four minutes in succession—think of it!—and the game was at no time during the chase thick enough to admit of a wholesale massacre, such as William delights in. So, when after three hours it was reported that he had killed only one hundred and one hares, he sent for his carriage and without further ado drove back to Liebenberg, there to seek the seclusion of his chamber, from which he did not emerge until next morning. The feelings of Count Philli and his cousin Botho, suddenly disillusioned, may be better imagined than defined. To Her Majesty our grand-master said afterward: "That lonely supper on Wednesday evening I shall never forget. Compared with it a funeral would be gay.

We were all in a melting mood, and had not the heart to touch champagne."

Next morning the Kaiser held half an hour's private conversation with Count Botho about certain newspaper attacks upon the Prussian Premier which, the latter claimed, were inspired by Caprivi, but, though sympathizing with the petitioner, the Emperor refused to take up cudgels on his behalf. To our Court-marshal he said: "I should be sorry to lose your brother; I will try to keep him, but, you must admit, this time Caprivi has completely outgeneralled His Excellency."

That was Thursday afternoon. On Friday afternoon, both the Chancellor and the President of the Prussian Ministry resigned: Eulenburg had been weighed and found short three or four hundred skins. If William had shot five hundred head of hare, instead of one hundred and one, Count Botho would probably have returned from Liebenberg with the patent of Emperor's lieutenant of Alsace in his pocket. Such was the impression at Court, at least. As it happened, the cousin of the Liebenberger was forced to re-enter private life, though still in his best years, and hardly rich enough to retire.

When all was over, and the Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, related by marriage to both their Majesties (he is the husband of William's second cousin, Leopoldine of Baden, and a brother of Her Majesty's mother), had taken Uncle Chlodwig's place in the imperial palace at Strassburg, I heard the Kaiser say to his wife one November evening, after a discussion of "the new brooms in Russia" (Nicholas II had ascended the throne a few days before): "I think I will adhere, for the future, to that policy of our Muscovite brethren,—placing relatives in commanding positions. Langenburg, if he half understands his business, can have the *Statthalterschaft* until our boys grow up, and

then each of them may take a turn at it. It is one of the few paying offices within my gift, and I am now glad I did not allow the Eulenburgs to persuade me to give it to one of their crew" ("*habe mich nicht breitschlagen lassen*"). "Botho is not rich enough, not big enough, and there would have been no end of a howl about the Prussian *Junker*, anyhow."

"Moderation, the virtue of which Princes stand in such urgent need, is never found in passionate hunters, who experience an irresistible impulse to pursue the game and a cruel and bloody delight in killing." This passage in Her Majesty's copy of Frederick the Great's "Antimacchiavell,"[1] which the young Princes are allowed to handle freely, is hidden, the margin of the page containing it being pasted to the next, as if by accident. The boys shall not learn of the judgment passed by an ancestor on this father's terrible frenzy for blood; but this ostrich policy, justified in the children's case, cannot obscure the fact that the Kaiser grows fonder of the gory spectacles to which imperial hunts have degenerated from year to year.

A shortage of a couple of hundred hare cost Count Botho the proudest office under the Crown; a single buck came near depriving the nation of the services of one of the ablest officers in the army; for the sake of a few tough rabbits the Kaiser insulted a venerable adjutant-general of his grandfather in a manner that would have resulted in a challenge if rank did not make a crowned poltroon inviolable.

And not satisfied with indulging his passion in the field, the Kaiser must needs surround himself at all times with

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[1] Her Majesty's private library consists of the works of Frederick the Great, those of Moltke, in German and English, a Bible, and a few pious books.

trophies of his skill as a death-giver; the most prominent object in his study is a long table, covered with green cloth, containing the antlers of the roebucks killed by him in the course of the year, while under the table, and all around on the floor, are the bigger antlers of slain deer. Ministers of State delivering reports upon the reception of which hinges the fate of government measures, of peace or war, or, perchance, the life of some doomed man appealing to the King's grace, must be forever prepared to be interrupted by a "Look at this ten" (or fourteen) "'ender'" (meaning antlers with the given number of branches),—"the prime stag among a battalion I mowed down at Rominton."

Gun-charger Rieger has the care of these trophies, and has little time for anything else. At great dinners, when he stands behind His Majesty's chair, this man is often consulted about dates and incidents as William tells visiting sovereigns of his achievements with the rifle.

As mentioned, the Kaiser's correspondence with his wife during his frequent absences from home consists mainly of telegraphic reports of the number of game killed. Her Majesty's ladies, therefore, take little interest in these messages, though etiquette and policy compel us to feign enthusiasm; but in May, 1895, when the Kaiser was at Proeckelwitz, there arrived a telegram that caused the liveliest concern, not to say excitement, among all members of the *entourage*. "Just shot a buck which Kessel shot past. Wilhelm." "*Gerade einen Bock geschossen den Kessel vorbeigeschossen hat. Wilhelm,*" read the badly-constructed despatch, which reached the palace late at night, and which the Empress exhibited at second breakfast. Auguste Victoria laughed and joked about it; but the rest of us saw in the triumphant tone of the missive only the disturbing evidence of a wrangle between two friends, the Kaiser and

his efficient adjutant-general, who, by the way, is a man of sense, exercising the best influence over his erratic master.

A few days later this story was whispered in all the antechambers:

"At Proeckelwitz roe is not so plentiful as to admit of *battues;* bucks must be stalked, and it is the Emperor's boast that no one but himself ever brought down a respectable head of game in that neighborhood,—a fact not to be wondered at considering the standing imperial injunction against *poaching* when he is around. Now it happens that Count Dohna and General von Kessel are good friends. So, when the hunting-party arrived, His Lordship took the adjutant aside, and said: 'Don't breathe a word of this. I have ordered a buck for you at my neighbors west of the Proeckelwitz grounds. Be ready to-morrow night at ten. My valet will drive you to the spot where you must lay in ambush. The stalking will be done by my friend's chasseur.'"

This plan was carried out in every respect with the utmost secrecy, but, owing to some pick-thank, the sovereign got wind of the arrangement, and the moment von Kessel cocked his gun he heard a derisive laugh at the back of him. Of course, the shot failed, and the Emperor, emerging from a thicket with Herr Rieger, cried: "Ivenak, that was a prime shot you made. Just go home and telegraph to my wife that you shot a buck in—your mind."

Von Kessel was white with rage, as any disappointed sportsman might be. "Your Majesty," he roared, "I am not going to do anything of the kind."

The Kaiser, I am told by one of the ladies of the Dohna family, who received her information from the General's *Jäger*, bit his lip, and, drawing himself up, said: "And if I command you to do so?"

"Then I must beg to be excused from any further obligation to be at Your Majesty's orders."

After this rebuff, William withdrew, without further words, and after another hour's hunting succeeded in shooting a roe. At supper he appeared in joyous mood as if nothing had happened, thus putting Herr von Kessel and Count Dohna at ease. "I will have to trouble you for a piece of paper and a pencil," he said to the host as he sat down. Writing-material was brought in, and he scribbled a few words, then handed the message around the table. It was the telegram above quoted. "What do you say to this, Ivenak?" laughed the Kaiser. Kessel, who had previously informed Count Dohna of his intention to formally resign from the service, was disarmed by the childish display; his indignation evaporated, and he answered: "A good fish story, that Her Majesty will doubtless enjoy."

"Ah, come off, Kessel" (in the desire to smooth over the controversy of the forest the Kaiser had found his bantering tone again): "you know very well that your buck ran into Proeckelwitz grounds, where my unerring rifle brought him down."

In this case the breach in a friendship of long standing was allowed to heal; but a similar incident cost William the affection and esteem of one of the royal family's stoutest supporters, Count Lehndorff, sometime the favorite adjutant-general of the old Emperor.

Out of compliment to His Majesty, who regards everybody who has enjoyed his grandsire's friendship with a sort of veneration, the old General had been placed next to the Kaiser at a chase in Neugattersleben, held in December, 1895. As on that eventful occasion in Liebenberg, a year before, the hare did not rush to the slaughter as fast as William liked, and at the *Ha-la-lit* "only" two hundred

and ten leapers were placed to his credit. His neighbor, Count Lehndorff, brought down forty.

"Two hundred and ten plus forty makes a round quarter of a thousand,—a royal number for a bad day," exclaimed William, who was in great ill-humor. "Confound the impudence of the fellow who shoots game coming within range of my rifle and which properly belongs to me."

At this unheard-of insult, Lehndorff's right hand instinctively seized his *couteau de chasse*, but his temper got the better of him for a single moment only. "The *fellow* who handed William I the diploma that made him German Emperor[1] may well consider himself above the charge of impudence," he said, in his simple and impressive style. And turning to his friends, continued: "I will not quarrel with the grandson of the King whom I attended in three victorious wars and at whose side I courted death at Königsgrätz when all seemed lost."

A stiff bow, a few words of excuse to Herr von Alvensleben, and the old General got into his trap. He has ever since avoided William's company "as that of a madman's."

While the members of His Majesty's staff assert that the monarch is never in better humor than after successfully playing some trick upon a friend, it shall not be denied that he is very agreeable company if he has half a mind to be. He loves a merry jest at a stag party, knows the art of making pleasant conversation, sings, badly, it is true, but nevertheless entertainingly enough among friends; enjoys good music, and is a clever hand at any game,—billiards, skat, poker, and what-not? and, better still, he never allows

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[1] At Versailles, December 18, 1870, when Lehndorff handed King William the petition of the Reichstag of the North German Federation, asking him to assume the imperial crown.

the stakes to go above a pfennig (a quarter of a cent) a point. If Diana has smiled upon him, and the host showed a lucky hand in the selection of the menu, he usually orders his portfolio of photographs to be brought in after dinner, and, leaving everybody a choice of pictures, inscribes his name, together with the date, and often some cheerful words of remembrance, on a dozen or half a hundred pasteboards, as the case might be.

In such jovial fashion the royal hunt at Amtsrath von Dietze's seat, Barby, winds up year after year, for the arrangements there are invariably the most satisfactory, both nature and the kitchen offering ample plenitude of good things. It is at Barby manor-house, too, where William habitually makes his speech about pot-luck and the late *Eberhardt im Barte*, whom he is trying hard to emulate; but, seeing that the tax commissioners have raised the Amtsrath twenty-five per cent. since he began to entertain the Kaiser, William's reassuring words must be rather galling. However that may be, the old councillor can hardly do enough for his august guest, even though his wife, the prototype of a saving *Hausfrau*, sometimes flatly refuses to let things go to extremes. So it happened in December, 1896, that she took a bottle of wine, from which her husband was about to serve the Kaiser, out of the Amtsrath's hand, with the words: "Nay, nay, hubby, not from the best just yet." The dignified old squire looked ready to die of mortification, but his fat little spouse continued undisturbed: "You know at the Schloss we had German champagne with our soup; the expensive French vintage was saved until dessert."

The *pièce de résistance* at every Barby hunt dinner is a roast turkey. "If at any time His Majesty should return with his game-bag completely empty, I wager I would lure him from his room with one word: '*Puterbraten*,'" says

Madame von Dietze; and that is no idle boast, for William is extremely fond of the Yankee bird, as he calls it, and the Barby brand is supposed to be the finest on record.

"Egloffstein," cried the Kaiser, addressing his House-marshal at the other end of the table some little while after the bottle incident, in an endeavor to put the Amtsrath at his ease again,—"why in thunder, Egloffstein, can't I get a turkey like this at my own house?"

"Because," said the courtier, rising and bowing to Madame von Dietze, sitting on the Kaiser's right, "Your Majesty's turkeys do not have the care those of the Frau Amtsräthin enjoy."

"Well spoken," remarked Herr von Kessel, assuming the voice and gestures of an auctioneer; "this *Truthahn*, for instance, went to bed with madame every night for the last month or so, and ——"

"Bibs!" interrupted the Emperor, "it can't be true. Otherwise, who might be your *fat* friend on this silver platter?"

"Let me finish, Your Majesty! I meant to add: '*and in the morning was regaled with the most fulsome breakfast of maize and barley.*'"

All laughed, and the Kaiser said: "But inasmuch as I cannot ask *gnädige Frau* to sleep in my hennery, the question that gave rise to our discussion remains unsolved."

"Then let me send a first-rate New Year's turkey to the Schloss," pleaded the host.

The offer was gladly accepted, and on his return home His Majesty, from whom I have the minutes of the conversation quoted, promised us a regular feast for some evening after the holidays.

At last the much-talked-about *Truthahn* was served with becoming state and many appetizing accessories, but, alas! failed to conquer. Though not quite as dry as the average

bird of his family eaten at the Prussian Court, the dish disappointed even those of us who habitually take the Emperor's laudations with a grain of salt or two. William was furious. Turning to Rieger, he ordered him to proceed to the kitchen and inform the mouth-cook "of His Majesty's all-highest displeasure and disappointment, and," he cried after the man, "tell him also that on my travels I've encountered the best meals in houses where they employ women cooks. If he fails with one of my favorite dishes again, there will be an upheaval in the lower regions of this palace and we may try a regime of aprons instead of caps."

The same night House-marshal von Lyncker, who is an adept in the art of currying favor, wrote to Amtsrath's explaining the non-success of the experiment, and Madame von Dietze, taking pity on William, not only promised to rehabilitate the Barby bird, but see to it that the next one was properly cooked. So the good woman set to work and stuffed the pride of her barn-yard for many weeks with the finest cereals and boiled chicken, and when he had increased ten pounds, sent him to Berlin, together with her own female Reynière. Kaiser and Kaiserin, the children, and the entire Court visited the proud turkey in his coop while the petticoated chef explained his good points with many courtesies. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and "courtiers live to eat." What a meal it was, and how gracious His Majesty after the first bite! Last February,[1] Eugene Richter made his great speech against William's hunting companions, who, he thundered, manipulate the Kaiser at will. "My African Empire for a *lettre de cachet* that will send this *rabulist* to Spandau! Would I not gladly forget all about him there!" exclaimed His

[1] February 12, 1895, in the Reichstag.

Majesty when the tirade became known. These followers of Diana certainly have some little influence with the Emperor, but to obtain the sway Herr Richter imputes to them, they would have to go to school with Anna, the Barby cook. She was the queen-bee of the Schloss for many days, and, if fate had made her a lady, instead of a poor country-wench, she might have obtained the first place in the royal *ménage* for the asking, with the proviso, however, that she devote herself to turkey-cooking during the season.

Whenever the Court-marshal catches a new bird[1] eager to place his game at William's disposal, he is careful to inform the noble gentleman that the regulation hunt dinner should consist of at least six courses; but when the Kaiser assembles his generous friends at his own fireside, at the Chalet Lindstedt, in the Potsdam district, for instance, at Hubertusstock or Letzlingen, moderation and simplicity are trumps, dinners being tabooed, and only breakfast, late luncheon, and suppers are offered, where cutlets and beefsteak take the place of roast, and fried apples form the dessert, with beer or light wines as a beverage, and punch as a substitute for champagne. So the imperial guests usually make for the nearest restaurant as soon as they return to town. "They come from dinner at Court," say the citizens who recognize the royal hunt uniform; "no wonder they are famished. Prussian provisioning makes lean horses."

Aside from his hunting companions, His Majesty has few friends and no intimates. Though Herr von Helldorff, Baron Manteuffel, and Count Douglas are sometimes so

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[1] "Another bird caught," wrote Frederick William I in his diary when he succeeded in selling one of his Prussian orders to some ambitious simpleton, and to this day the phrase is much *en vogue* at the Berlin Court.

designated, there is nothing in their relations to His Majesty to justify the assumption. At the palace the triumvirate is called "the Kaiser's most submissive political General Staff," because William uses these gentlemen as cat's-paws sometimes, as clubs on other occasions, when the conservatives cannot be brought to book in any legitimate way. They breakfast or dine at Court quite frequently, and are favorably regarded by the Empress, but on the whole their reception, while never lacking in cordiality, is official in character. Conforming to Chesterfield's advice, these gentlemen "made themselves necessary," but the Kaiser is not always eager to do business, as the record of his occupations mentioned in another chapter shows. Herr von Helldorff, besides, has somewhat lost caste since His Majesty adopted his vacillating policy in respect to Bismarck. During the first three months of the year 1890, while the old Chancellor was kept away from Berlin through all sorts of machinations that made it patent to everybody at Court that he was about to be shelved (his son Herbert was the only one who failed to understand the situation),—while these intrigues were being spun, Herr von Helldorff was a daily visitor at the palace, and, to judge from remarks the Empress let fall in our circle off and on, he played a decisive part in the conspiracy that discrowned the great man. Whether he informed the Emperor that Bismarck had become a morphine fiend and was unable to think connectedly, I cannot tell, but His Majesty mentioned the rumor at luncheon one day after having been closeted with both the agrarian chieftain and Dr. Hinzpeter the whole morning. The Kaiser's old preceptor Hinzpeter, by the way, was never so prominent at Court as when Bismarck's star was on the wane. We saw him flit in and out of the Kaiser's study at all times of the day and in the evening,

and quite often he installed himself in His Majesty's apartments as early as eight o'clock in the morning, even before William had breakfasted. But this friendship was too thick to last, the more so as Dr. Hinzpeter himself placed a stumbling-block in the way of his ambition to live at Court by his marriage to Mademoiselle d'Harcourt ex-governess to the Emperor's sisters. So Hinzpeter was packed off to Bielefeld, and the castle and Neues Palais knew him no more.

Until the spring of 1892, Judicial Councillor Kunze was another of the Kaiser's untitled friends, and he had, perhaps, more influence over William than all the rest, seeing that he aspired to become His Majesty's *Hofjude*, or financial agent. Kunze manipulated the ruinous Schloss Freiheit Lottery, mentioned in the eighth chapter, and was at the bottom of the colossal building projects, having a game of some sort *in petto* to meet each proposed extravagance. However, as soon as these schemes threatened to compromise the Kaiser, their plebeian advocate was dropped as a "designing and even dangerous person," and since then I have seen William pass his old-time friend, who was half doubled up by the most submissive of bows, without taking the slightest notice of him. That does not signify, however, that Kunze is lastingly disgraced. On the contrary, if the "difficulties of the exchequer" continue, he is almost sure to be restored.

Among men of his own caste and age, William has had but one intimate, the late Rudolph of Austria; but the pleasant relations between these young men, based upon mutual likes and dislikes, came to an abrupt end some four years previous to the Archduke's awful death, discord arising in the summer of 1885 when Prince and Princess William were spending several weeks at their Imperial Highnesses' country-place near Vienna. From this outing

the Princess returned all of a sudden and post-haste to Potsdam, while her husband went on an impromptu tour of military inspections in the provinces.

And the reason?

Princess Philip of Coburg, sister of the Archduchess Stephanie, told me that William, returning in her brother-in-law's company from a stag party late one evening, proposed the game of *changer les dames*, which, Her Royal Highness insists, is "quite common" among German officers. Rudolph is said to have been agreeable, but when William entered the Crown Princess Stephanie's room, Her Imperial Highness made a tremendous uproar, causing Auguste Victoria to awake, and" (I am still quoting Princess Philip), "thus the pretty scheme was spoiled."

Next morning the young wives got together; but as each charged the other's husband with instigating the devilish plot, the happy family party was bound to break up, and their Highnesses separated without saying good-bye. Such, at least, was common report at the Court of Empress Augusta in Coblentz, where I happened to be at the time.

As for the rest, it will probably never be known which of the royal gentlemen incited the other to the act; maybe both were drunk, and agreed upon the dictum of Prussian army men: "*Unter Kameraden ist's ganz egal*" (literally: "Among comrades it's the same thing") as a good joke.

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